

AHP 50 THE MAGICIAN

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དབང་རྒྱལ་དོན་གྲུབ། Dbang rgyal don grub & ཚེ་རིང་རྡོ་རྗེ། Tshe ring rdo rje



Dbang rgyal don grub and Tshe ring rdo rje

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ASIAN HIGHLANDS PERSPECTIVES

Asian Highlands Perspectives (AHP) is a trans-disciplinary journal focusing on the Tibetan Plateau and surrounding regions, including the Southeast Asian Massif, Himalayan Massif, the Extended Eastern Himalayas, the Mongolian Plateau, and other contiguous areas. The editors believe that cross-regional commonalities in history, culture, language, and socio-political context invite investigations of an interdisciplinary nature not served by current academic forums. *AHP* contributes to the regional research agendas of Sinologists, Tibetologists, Mongolists, and South and Southeast Asianists, while also forwarding theoretical discourse on grounded theory, interdisciplinary studies, and collaborative scholarship.

AHP publishes occasional monographs and essay collections both in hardcopy (ISSN 1835-7741) and online (ISSN 1925-6329). The online version is an open access source, freely available at <https://goo.gl/JOeYnq>. The print edition is available to libraries and individuals at-cost through print on demand publisher Lulu.com at <https://goo.gl/rIT9lI>. The journal currently has a core editorial team of four members and a consultative editorial board of twenty-five experts from a variety of disciplines. All submissions to the journal are peer-reviewed by the editorial board and independent, anonymous assessors.

AHP welcomes submissions from a wide range of scholars with an interest in the area. Given the dearth of current knowledge on this culturally complex area, we encourage submissions that contain descriptive accounts of local realities - especially by authors from communities in the Asian Highlands - as well as theory-oriented articles. We publish items of irregular format - long articles, short monographs, photo essays, fiction, auto-ethnography, and so on. Authors receive a PDF version of their published work. Potential contributors are encouraged to consult previous issues.

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THE MAGICIAN

by

འཕགས་པ་ལྷ་མོ་འཇམ་དཔལ་ལྷ་མོ་

Dbang rgyal don grub

and

འཕགས་པ་ལྷ་མོ་འཇམ་དཔལ་ལྷ་མོ་

Tshe ring rdo rje

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PREFACE

Now that you have gone through the rite of passage, you are a spirit medium. You are no longer an ordinary person. You are a holy servant of the Mighty One. With this newly bestowed title and reverence that comes with it, you must realize your existence is only to serve the Mighty One, to help and guide people to overcome misfortunes and calamities. May you stay on the course as long as you are a spirit medium! May the lure of money, power, and women not dissuade from you from being true to yourself and to the vows you make today. May you be a true manifestation of our religion, which is to love all beings and help them equally and with no conditions attached! - BLA MA

You're the Spirit Medium? You must have magic powers! Like the Monkey King, right? Why didn't you vanish before we hit you? Huh? The Monkey King does that. I see, you're not that angry! Let's see what happens when you are agitated. Let's hit him harder! - YOUNG MAN

Asian Highlands Perspectives is delighted to feature *The Magician* as its fiftieth volume. The authors, Dbang rgyal don grub and Tshe ring rdo rje, were both born and raised in Gcan tsha (Jianzha) County in Mtsho sngon (Qinghai) Province, learned English at Mtsho sngon Teacher's University in Zi ling (Xining) City, and both went abroad for four years of undergraduate study. They present what may be the first play/script written in English by Tibetans in China. The focus is on "the deeply rooted dependence many Tibetans have on religion and religious figures, some of whom are frauds and use religion as a tool for personal gain" (INTRODUCTION).

A *lha ba* (*lha pa*, *lha wa*) 'spirit/trance medium' features prominently in *The Magician*. Another important character is Mtsho

mo, who meets a tragic end that traces back to her belief in and involvement with the *lha ba*. *The Magician* offers us a better understanding of intergenerational attitudes and behaviors related to local religious belief; relationships between practitioners and their assistants; the circumstances that lead to consulting a practitioner; how the legal system reacts to complaints against practitioners; how Tibetan women interpret their roles as wives, daughters, and mothers-in-law, especially in times of family discord; and insights into the future of practitioners such as the *lha ba* who primarily perform in private homes at the invitation of the host family. These perceptions of complex realities in the spiritual realm contribute to a better appreciation of local belief and conduct, and possible outcomes.

FURTHER STUDY

For an important investigation of the *lha ba* in Reb gong with a useful bibliography listing published works in Tibetan, English, and Chinese see:

Snying bo rgyal and R Solomon Rino. 2008. Deity Men: Reb gong Trance Mediums in Transition. *Asian Highlands Perspectives* 3.

For more recent work in English, see:

Daniel Berounský. 2012. The Murdered King Protecting Fields: A Tibetan Deity Medium from a Bonpo Village in Amdo. *Mongolo-Tibetica Pragenisa* 12(2):21-50

Charlene E Makley. 2013. The Politics of Presence: Voice, Deity Possession, and Dilemmas of Development Among Tibetans in the People's Republic of China. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55(3):665-700.

For video, see:¹

- <http://bit.ly/2FavYUh>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rc46bYWL3oU>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2Jy9K6U98w>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIiRX8G4fj8>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laVL-LYTDvs>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8jLBMXi_Ag

CK Stuart

¹ All accessed 18 February 2018.

THE AUTHORS

Dbang rgyal don grub དབང་རྒྱལ་དོན་གྲུབ། (b. 1988) is a native Tibetan from Gcan tsha (Jianzha) County, Mtsho sngon (Qinghai) Province, China. He graduated in 2011 with a BA in Business from Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York. He is an entrepreneur, and interested in creative writing.



Tshe ring rdo rje ཚེ་རིང་རོ་རྗེ། is from Gcan tsha (Jianzha) County in Mtsho sngon (Qinghai) Province, China. He graduated from Duke University in USA with a BA in Visual and Media Studies in 2015, is married, and makes films.



INTRODUCTION

This script explores the deeply rooted dependence many Tibetans have on religion and religious figures, some of whom are frauds and use religion as a tool for personal gain. By revealing the tragedy of a Tibetan woman and her family, brought about by a well-respected Tibetan *lha ba* 'spirit medium', we examine a dark side of Tibetan society, spirituality, and religious practices that often elude the legal system ordinary Tibetans have access to. The play also highlights Tibetans' ambivalence toward embracing a more modern culture that tarnishes embedded traditional spirituality and cultural practices that for generations have defined who they are and how they should behave.

KUN DGA' is a spirit medium who is very respected by local communities as a spiritual savior and a direct link to a particular deity. Many Tibetan families believe that the spirit medium can exorcise evil spirits and ghosts, and remove items and spaces in which evil has taken root and is harming the family. He is also an ambitious, greedy, woman chaser.

The story begins with a ritual KUN DGA' performs in a Tibetan home. Afterwards, a local beauty named MTSHO MO comes to KUN DGA' and begs him to save her dying husband. KUN DGA' indicates through a ritual that MTSHO MO is possessed and that she must leave her husband if they are to save him. Moreover, under the pretext of saving her husband, KUN DGA' has sexual intercourse with MTSHO MO and impregnates her. Police interrogate him for alleged rape, but release him for lack of evidence. After KUN DGA's release, MTSHO MO dies in a car accident that he coincidentally comes across. KUN DGA' leaves the accident scene with a matter-of-fact attitude and hurries to a performance appointment in a Tibetan home where the family respectfully welcomes him.

While attending a local religious meeting in 2015, we realized that the spirit medium who previously had pierced his cheeks with spikes and cut his tongue with a sharp blade during religious rituals was no longer present. We were curious to learn of his whereabouts. We later learned that over the course of four years, he had gained a

reputation for solving family problems and curing patients through his ritual performances. This success had helped him accumulate wealth and prestige. We also heard that he had forced himself on a village woman and that though this became public, no local was willing to defend the woman. Later, we learned of similar incidents in other communities.

The Magician encourages Tibetans to rethink and begin a conversation about the role religion should play in daily life.

Dbang rgyal don grub འཕང་རྒྱལ་དོན་གྲུབ།
Tshe ring rdo rje ཚེ་རིང་རོ་རྗེ།

CHARACTERS

ADULT is a young Tibetan who goes through an initiation ritual to become a local spirit medium.

AGED MAN is ADULT's father. He is present at ADULT's initiation ritual.

AGED WOMAN is ADULT's mother. She is present at ADULT's initiation ritual.

ASSISTANT is the driver and ritual assistant to KUN DGA'. He is trusted by KUN DGA'. ASSISTANT understands what KUN DGA' does while carrying out his religious activity, and knows that it results in personal gain. He supports KUN DGA' in his work because of the benefit it brings to him.

BLA MA is a local religious figure. He helps a young Tibetan go through the rite of passage to become a spirit medium.

BOY is RIN CHEN's son.

CAR DEALER is a local Tibetan man who mostly sells second-hand cars. He is a close friend of ASSISTANT. He sells a second-hand car to KUN DGA' with the intention of making a good profit.

DOCTOR is a doctor at a local pharmacy. He prescribes medicines for MTSHO MO's sick husband.

KUN DGA' is a local Tibetan spirit medium. He is intelligent, loves money, is strongly attracted to women, and cares greatly about his reputation. He is compassionate, but also believes that one must take care of oneself in the world. He questions his work as a spirit medium, but these doubts do not mean he relinquishes the profession his livelihood is based on.

LHA MO is MTSHO MO's mother's friend. She tells MTSHO MO's mother about a woman who was victimized by a religious figure.

MAN A, MAN B, MAN C, MAN D are a group of young Tibetans who play *mahjong* in a local shop. KUN DGA' hears the benefits of buying a car from them.

MOTHER-IN-LAW is TSHE RING's mother. She is very religious and believes that everything relates to religion. Consequently, she absolutely believes her son can be cured through the performance of rituals that a spirit medium can perform.

MTSHO MO is a hardworking, loyal wife who does her best to help her husband and his family. She had a happy life before her husband fell ill. To cure her husband, she spends all her money and is now helpless. With no other options, she reaches out to KUN DGA' for help. Although she has mixed feelings about the efficacy of spirit medium rituals, she is desperate and feels she has no other options.

MTSHO MO's PARENTS are conservative and oppose MTSHO MO's marriage.

OLD LADY is RIN CHEN's mother. She is devoutly religious and believes her illness is the result of something that harbors evil. She invites KUN DGA' to perform a ritual in the hope of eradicating the evil spirit.

POLICE OFFICER is a local policeman. He sees KUN DGA' off after questioning him.

POLICEMAN A and POLICEMAN B are policemen who question KUN DGA' for alleged rape.

REPAIRMAN is a local Chinese who repairs KUN DGA''s crashed car.

RIN CHEN is OLD LADY's son. He gives KUN DGA' a coral necklace that KUN DGA' identified as harboring evil, and later sells for a goodly sum and pockets the proceeds.

SHOPKEEPER is a local Tibetan who manages a small shop in the village. He is a close friend of KUN DGA'. He tells KUN DGA' about what villagers think of his relationship with MTSHO MO.

TSHE RING is MTSHO MO's husband. He is very ill and all treatments have failed.

VILLAGER is a local man. He respects KUN DGA', who gives him a bottle of water while he is working in hot weather.

WAITRESS is a young woman who works at *KING OF NOODLES*.

WOMAN is RIN CHEN's wife. She is reluctant to give up her coral necklace.

YOUNG MAN is a male villager who saves MTSHO MO. He dislikes KUN DGA', who he thinks is pretentious and a fraud.

YOUNG MEN harass MTSHO MO and taunt and beat KUN DGA'.

YOUNG WORKER is a young man who works at a gas station.

ABBREVIATIONS

Int. interior, shots made or an event taking place in an interior setting.

Ext. exterior, shots made or an event taking place in an exterior setting.

I/E. interior/exterior, shots made or an event taking place in both interior and exterior settings.

IV intravenous

Zanaggy

THE MAGICIAN

Ext. police station - afternoon

A sunny day, few clouds in the sky.

A silver car is parked outside the POLICE STATION. It is the only civilian vehicle present at the station.

Numerous cigarette butts of different lengths litter the ground. The car has been parked for a long time.

Int. the silver car - afternoon

A car pendant is attached to the rearview mirror along with a yellow scarf, which is tied in religiously significant knots. It is motionless.

The pendant shines gold when sunshine strikes it at a tilted angle. It has six Chinese characters that read "GOD BLESS GOOD MEN."

A man's left hand is on the steering wheel. His forefingers and middle fingers constantly tap the steering wheel, making a barely audible sound. Suddenly, his right hand folds back the cuff of the other sleeve.

He checks the time.

It is one PM.

The ASSISTANT sits in the car. He lights a cigarette, inhales, and puffs out plumes of smoke. The smoke rises in the air gradually and fills the front seat.

The ASSISTANT sits still and keeps looking in the direction of the POLICE STATION as smoke gradually invades the back seat of the car and fogs the interior of the car.

As the smoke brings discomfort to his eyes, he raises his right hand to his face and fans at the smoke several times. Nonetheless, he does not stop smoking. As he inhales strongly, the cigarette sizzles into a

shorter length.

The ASSISTANT rolls down the window. He continues smoking.

He suddenly throws out his unfinished cigarette butt, opens the door with his left hand on his side of the car, steps out on his left foot, and walks to the other side of the car.

Ext. police station - afternoon

KUN DGA' exits through a glass door that has two large, obvious Chinese characters reading POLICE STATION in blue. He shakes hands with a POLICE OFFICER.

KUN DGA' is a tall slender man in his mid-forties, and dressed in fine clothes.

The POLICE OFFICER goes back into the station after a short conversation with KUN DGA'.

KUN DGA' does not immediately come to the waiting car. He stands still in front of the station. He raises his head and looks up into the sky. He then shades his eyes with his right hand to block the blinding sunlight. He puts his hand down, looks for the steps, and goes to the waiting car slowly with confidence and in relief.

The ASSISTANT opens the door for him. KUN DGA' says nothing to the ASSISTANT. He gets into the front seat. The ASSISTANT closes the door and runs back to the driver's seat eagerly.

Int. the silver car - afternoon

Once seated in the car and settled, KUN DGA' bends slightly, hand reaching to his other sleeve and removes his jacket. He tosses it in the back seat, ignoring where it lands.

He opens the glove compartment, takes out a can of Coca-Cola, pops the tab, and drinks. He sinks into the seat and takes a long deep

breath of relief.

The ASSISTANT looks at KUN DGA' and sees he is relaxed and settled.

ASSISTANT

It was a tough struggle, huh?

KUN DGA'

(Unwillingly)

Nah, not a big deal, I'm just tired, you know, of being interrogated for so long, like the criminal that I'm not.

ASSISTANT

(In a supportive tone)

I know, right? But whoever wrongly accused you must be disappointed now that you're out and freely moving around.

KUN DGA'

(Without any sign of emotion)

Yeah, he oughta be.

ASSISTANT

I didn't think you would let me be your ASSISTANT again after what I did... I'll loyally cherish this second chance.

KUN DGA' pays attention to what his ASSISTANT says but does not comment.

KUN DGA'

Let's get out of here. I don't want to be here a second longer.

The ASSISTANT starts the car.

Int. the silver car - afternoon

The pendant swings as the car starts and shakes. The sound of the car engine and front wheels crunching pebbles on the rugged road is the only noise audible outside the station. The car makes a turn and joins

the main road. Slowly, it departs the POLICE STATION, leaving a swirl of dust behind.

The ASSISTANT honks as the car rejoins the road. KUN DGA' gives a long, cold stare at the POLICE STATION through the side window as the car slowly passes the front of the station. When the station is no longer in sight, he turns his attention to the front road matter-of-factly.

Ext. outside of the police station - afternoon

The CAR leaves the police station with only its rear and number plate visible. It slowly disappears around a turn.

Int. police station - afternoon

The POLICE OFFICER stands smoking and staring through a barred window at the silver car leaving the station. When the car is gone, he throws the unfinished cigarette butt into a garbage can nearby and walks away from the window.

Int. the silver car - afternoon

The ASSISTANT says nothing. He takes a quick peek at KUN DGA' and continues driving. KUN DGA' reclines in the seat and relaxes. The SILVER CAR moves smoothly but suddenly takes a violent turn, almost striking an electricity pole on the side of the road. The ASSISTANT turns the steering wheel violently. The car misses the pole.

ASSISTANT

(Angry and nervous at the same time)

Fuck! Crazy woman!

KUN DGA' is startled. He sits up.

KUN DGA'

(With a look of curiosity)

What is it?

ASSISTANT

(A bit annoyed)

That crazy MTSO MO! She just jumped in front of the car, like she wanted to kill herself!

The ASSISTANT sticks his head out

ASSISTANT

Next time you jump in front of a car, make sure you jump under the wheels so that it actually kills you! Crazy bitch!

KUN DGA'

(Calmly)

Ignore her. Pull over and let her cross first.

He rolls down the car window, and tosses out the empty Coke can and rolls it back up.

I/E. on the village road - afternoon

The ASSISTANT pulls the car over on the roadside. MTSO MO is now gone. There is no sign of her. KUN DGA' leans back and rests.

A bit later, they set out again. The car moves forward smoothly. KUN DGA' relaxes. He closes his eyes again.

Seeing KUN DGA' shut his eyes, the ASSISTANT plays some music on the car's CD player - Tibetan religious drum music. BANG! BANG! BANG!

Some weeks earlier

Int. a traditional Tibetan house - on the floor

Constant DRUMMING: BANG! BANG! BANG!

A family of Tibetans kneel in a dimly-lit room. They put their palms together and touch them to their foreheads piously. Their heads bow a bit. Their eyes are totally closed. They chant inaudibly. No one looks around.

On an adobe bed platform

KUN DGA' is dressed in heavily decorated spirit medium clothing. He holds a drum in his left hand and a beater in the other. His face is hidden with a black string veil attached to his hat. He sits on an elevated platform - a table placed on white carpet folded in several layers. He faces the kneeling supplicants:

KUN DGA'

(In a stern voice)

May peace and the root of peace fall upon all beings! May all beings avoid suffering and all causes of calamities! May all beings achieve peace that relieves all sufferings! May all beings live in a state of balanced love and hate!

KUN DGA' rhythmically and slowly beats the drum.

On the floor

RIN CHEN brings a shovel of smoldering yak dung in front of KUN DGA'. He moves it back and below the platform on which KUN DGA' sits, and moves it clockwise around KUN DGA'. He then takes the shovel to each of the kneeling family member and blows smoke from the shovel into everyone's face as part of a religious purification process.

FAMILY MEMBERS do not move, regardless of the choking smoke.

Smoke gradually fills the room. It creates a mysterious heaven-like atmosphere.

Int. the traditional Tibetan house - on the adobe bed

Bright light from the room windows pierces the smoke, highlighting KUN DGA' and his ceremonial hat. In rhythm with his chanting, KUN DGA' shakes his head, breathes heavily, takes deep breaths, and raises his right hand high. He beats the drum methodically. BANG! BANG! BANG! Nonstop.

BRONZE BELLS attached to his hat become louder and make crisper bursts as his body shakes more and more intensely.

Sounds from the drum, bronze bells, and KUN DGA''s mouth produce a perfect yet mysterious rhythmic sound only heard in monasteries and sacred places in Tibetan areas.

FAMILY MEMBERS kowtow repeatedly.

In the center of the platform, near where KUN DGA' is seated, lies a feeble, seventy-something OLD LADY under several quilts. She occasionally looks at the spirit medium.

To the left of the OLD LADY stands an IV rack that has a bottle of unfinished fluid. On the right side, a prayer wheel leans against the wall.

A string of prayer beads is in reach of her right hand. Quilts and clothes that cover her are in a worn-out, unwashed state with circles of stained spots. Her gray hair is unkempt and uncombed.

KUN DGA' increases the sounds he is making and accelerates the speed of chanting, emphasizing his exalted status. He also inhales and exhales with greater force.

Smoke around KUN DGA' swirls in circles as he takes heavier breaths. The string veil moves from side to side as KUN DGA' shakes his head violently.

A smoldering fire of juniper leaves crackles.

KUN DGA''s face is revealed through the string veil. His forehead is

damp with sweat. Saliva generated from his non-stop chanting is evident at the corners of his mouth.

On the floor

The OLD LADY reaches for her prayer beads as the atmosphere moves towards a climax. She chants and counts the beads quickly.

KUN DGA' increases the chanting rhythm and strikes the drum harder and faster. The sound swallows the dimly lit room. Suddenly he screams at great volume. It seems he is shouting at someone.

The OLD LADY is startled. She jerks her hand, dropping the prayer beads on the floor. She attempts to turn to reach the prayer beads, but in vain. As she turns, she falls on the floor from the bed with a thud. She moans in pain.

Quilts wrapped around her body are pulled to the floor. The quilts are stained with spots of urine.

The FAMILY MEMBERS turn to the OLD LADY, but no one moves to help her.

A BOY kneeling by a woman stands up and walks toward the OLD LADY. The WOMAN yanks him by the arm, forcing him to kneel. The BOY obeys unwillingly. He kneels but does not stop looking at the OLD LADY. He also looks at KUN DGA' for his reaction.

KUN DGA' trembles even more, stomps harder, and murmurs.

The ASSISTANT quickly returns to KUN DGA' and kneels in front of him.

ASSISTANT

(Respectfully)

Dear Mighty One, we sincerely thank you for coming, and your compassion in saving us. We honor you and will continue to offer the best offerings! Now that you are with us please help us, guide

us to overcome the calamity we suffer from, the calamity that RIN CHEN's family is suffering from!

KUN DGA' continues to shake his head, inhales and blows hard in punctuations, and beats the drum hard.

BRONZE BELLS attached to his hat sound louder.

KUN DGA' gradually stops beating the drum but continues shaking his head.

KUN DGA'

(Possessed)

HAH, HAH, HAH, #@&*! *@#%! HAH, HAH, HAH, #@&*! *@#%!

HAH, HAH, HAH, #@&*! *@#%!

The ASSISTANT looks in the direction of the kneeling supplicants and shakes his head, signaling his failure to decipher what KUN DGA' says.

RIN CHEN also shakes his head.

The ASSISTANT again faces KUN DGA'.

ASSISTANT

Dear Mighty One, forgive our ignorance. We are unable to fathom your holy yet very foreign language. We know we are inferior. Oh Mighty One, our savior!

KUN DGA'

HAH! HAH! @##! @@! \$\$\$!

The FAMILY MEMBERS look at one another in confusion.

On the adobe bed

The ASSISTANT looks at the family members again and approaches KUN DGA' on his knees.

ASSISTANT

(A bit louder)

Dear Mighty One, as capable as you are, please guide us in our local language, for that is the only language we can comprehend.

KUN DGA' stands up, violently kicks the seat over, and runs back and forth across the platform, yelling and shouting in great wrath and irritation.

KUN DGA'

Where! Where! Where am I? What is the purpose of my visit?
What is it?

KUN DGA' brandishes the drumbeater that he holds as if he is about to hit someone with it. He shakes his head back and forth violently as if he has lost control of his head.

KUN DGA'

(Gets louder)

Fools! Fools! Don't you see what you have done? Where all these bad things are coming from? It is all over the room! I can even smell it!

On the floor

FAMILY MEMBERS nervously look at one another in confusion, but remain kneeling piously.

On the adobe bed

KUN DGA' stops running back and forth on the adobe bed. He suddenly leaps to the floor with a loud clap.

On the floor

The FAMILY MEMBERS, startled by this leap, look in his direction. KUN DGA' rushes directly to the family cabinet. He swings its doors open, ransacking and throwing everything on the floor.

Bowls, glasses, thermoses, and other items stored in the cabinet crash to the floor. Some shatter.

The FAMILY MEMBERS protect themselves from the flying broken bits. They continue kneeling.

The BOY is scared. He goes to the other side of the woman and hides. The WOMAN holds the boy in her arms to protect him from the flying glass and KUN DGA's wrath.

The ASSISTANT follows KUN DGA'. He occasionally lends support with both hands when KUN DGA' loses balance.

RIN CHEN walks close to the ASSISTANT in a half-bowed position.

RIN CHEN

(A look of worry and hesitation)

We have no inkling of what the Mighty One is suggesting. Please tell us what the Mighty One is after. I might be able to offer assistance. Do you think it is appropriate?

RIN CHEN looks at the broken glassware on the floor.

The ASSISTANT looks at the scattered glassware and walks to KUN DGA'. He leads him to sit on his platform.

RIN CHEN follows the ASSISTANT.

On the adobe bed

KUN DGA' sits down.

KUN DGA'

(Irritated and angry)

Where is it? Where is it? You know what I'm talking about! Bring it to me!

KUN DGA' shouts, shakes his head violently, abruptly stands up, and

kicks RIN CHEN in the chest, knocking him onto the floor.

RIN CHEN is frightened but gets up quickly and kneels. He looks at the ASSISTANT, suggesting he do something about it.

The ASSISTANT looks at RIN CHEN. He feels uneasy so swiftly approaches KUN DGA'. He holds KUN DGA'"s right hand firmly with both hands and looks at his face.

ASSISTANT

Dear Mighty One, please guide us. Make it clearer. We are too foolish to decipher your hints.

KUN DGA' stands up violently and shouts in local Tibetan.

KUN DGA'

Listen! Listen! Carefully! Something... something... something came from or was brought into this home from the east. East of here! Where the sun rises, to where rivers flow. It came with a person, came to this home with the arrival of a new person! It is precious. You know what it is! You know what it is! Bring it to me! Now!

RIN CHEN and FAMILY MEMBERS again look at one another and make no obvious moves. They look at the ASSISTANT and shake their heads.

ASSISTANT

Dear Mighty One, please be specific about the evil. Give us more hints.

KUN DGA'

(Loudly and stuttering)

HAH! HAH! A piece... a piece of cloth... cloth... bring... bring it to me!

The ASSISTANT turns around to RIN CHEN from KUN DGA', grabs him by the hand and pulls him aside. He whispers in RIN CHEN's ear.

On the floor

RIN CHEN nods and rushes to the other room. He comes back with a piece of cloth and a dagger. He hands them to the ASSISTANT.

On the adobe bed

KUN DGA' shakes his head and breaths and blows hard rhythmically.

BRONZE BELLS still ring.

The ASSISTANT moves forward to give the cloth and dagger to KUN DGA'.

KUN DGA' grabs them from the ASSISTANT, pierces the cloth with the dagger, and then lifts the cloth and sets it on fire. The CLOTH burns quickly.

KUN DGA' immediately puts out the fire with a strong puff. Before the fire is completely dead, he points at it.

KUN DGA'

Wipe your eyes clean and look at it! This! This! This is it! Bring this to me! Can't you see what this is?

Int. the Tibetan traditional house - on the floor

RIN CHEN looks at the woman.

RIN CHEN

(In hesitation)

Prayer beads?

RIN CHEN turns to his wife.

RIN CHEN

Bring Mother's prayer beads. Quick!

The woman rushes to the bed where the OLD LADY lies. He grabs the prayer beads from the OLD LADY and hands it to the ASSISTANT and goes back to kneel.

RIN CHEN does not look at her. He focuses on KUN DGA'.

Int. the Tibetan traditional house - on the adobe bed

The ASSISTANT takes the string of prayer beads from RIN CHEN and presents it to KUN DGA', holding it with two hands above his head. KUN DGA' grabs it from the ASSISTANT. He sniffs it several times and throws it away in anger.

KUN DGA'

Don't fool me! You filthy ones! Don't think you can fool me!

The string of PRAYER BEADS is thrown on the floor, in front of the WOMAN. The string breaks and beads scatter.

BOY

(Innocently)

Mother, it's not what the spirit medium wants.

WOMAN

(Glares at the boy in irritation)

Shut up! I heard!

KUN DGA'

(Again points at the cloth, which has now been reduced to ashes)
Bring this to me!

KUN DGA' stares at the WOMAN.

KUN DGA'

You! It is YOU who brought it into the family. When you first came here! Something valuable. It resembles prayers beads but is red, doesn't belong here and never will! Bring it to me now! Right now!

On the floor

The WOMAN holds her head down. She looks at RIN CHEN in hesitation, as if asking for permission.

RIN CHEN

(In a matter-of-fact attitude)

Where is it? Do as the Mighty One says.

The WOMAN unwillingly goes to a room across from KUN DGA'. She enters and then comes back to the door. She lightly lifts the door curtain with one hand, while rolling her eyes at RIN CHEN. She then lets go of the curtain and goes into the room.

RIN CHEN avoids eye contact and turns to KUN DGA'.

Int. the Tibetan traditional house - on the adobe bed

KUN DGA' shakes his head and breathes heavily.

Int. the Tibetan traditional house - on the floor

After a while, the WOMAN rushes out from the room holding something wrapped in an old handkerchief. She hands it to RIN CHEN and goes back to where she had been kneeling.

RIN CHEN hurriedly unwraps the handkerchief layer by layer.

The HANDKERCHIEF contains a fine, colorful coral necklace.

RIN CHEN holds it in his palms and hands it to KUN DGA'.

Int. the Tibetan traditional house - on the adobe bed

KUN DGA' takes it from RIN CHEN with his eyes closed. He feels it, rubs it between his palms, sniffs it, blows on it, and hands it to RIN CHEN.

KUN DGA'

You knew this all along! It does not belong here! Get rid of it! Take it out now! The longer it is in this home, the greater harm it will inflict upon you. Take it out!

KUN DGA' produces an extremely serious face. Those kneeling are quiet.

On the floor

RIN CHEN takes it from KUN DGA' and goes out in a rush.

KUN DGA' continues to tremble.

ASSISTANT

Is there anything else you seek help for?

FAMILY MEMBERS look at one another and shake their heads.

RIN CHEN goes to the ASSISTANT

RIN CHEN

I think it is all we have this time. Thank you!

The ASSISTANT goes to KUN DGA' and holds his hands.

ASSISTANT

Dear Mighty One, your presence has been a blessing. The family's calamity has been removed. Please be gone and we will call upon you when we are in difficulty. Be there for us when we need you. We will always worship you!

KUN DGA' shakes his head, hands, and his whole body faster for a few moments.

KUN DGA'

HAH, HAH, HAH, #@&*! *@#%! HAH, HAH, HAH, #@&*! *@#%!
HAH, HAH, HAH, #@&*! *@#%!

He slows down.

The ASSISTANT tightens his grip on KUN DGA's hand.

KUN DGA' takes deep breaths and slowly stops shaking.

ASSISTANT

Bring a bowl of water! Quickly!

The BOY rushes to a container of water and comes with a bowl full of water. KUN DGA' sits. While seated, he jumps up and lands his butt hard on his seat several times. The shaking of his head and body slows. The ASSISTANT takes the water from the BOY and hands it to KUN DGA'.

KUN DGA' takes it from the ASSISTANT. He holds the bowl with two hands and downs it immediately, as thirsty as though he had just crossed a desert. He then stands up.

The ASSISTANT takes the empty bowl from KUN DGA' and places it on the floor. He stands up, walks behind KUN DGA', and unties the knot that holds up his religious costume. He removes KUN DGA's medium costume and places it on the wooden box near him.

KUN DGA's forehead is damp with sweat. His hair is dripping wet. The ASSISTANT brings a towel from the box and wipes his face. He occasionally soaks it in water and then squeezes the water out.

KUN DGA' is tired. He sits in obvious exhaustion till he stops sweating after which he stands up and confidently walks to the OLD LADY, but with a look of worry. He sits and holds her hand in both of his.

On the floor.

KUN DGA'

How are you feeling now? I hope you will get better as a result of this ritual. I wonder what hospitals do these days other than charge

people this and that fee? Sometimes, old ways work better, I guess.

The OLD LADY smiles at KUN DGA' and wipes tears welling in the corners of her eyes.

OLD LADY

(Feels honored)

I think they have not been able to identify the root of the problem as you have done. I don't know. But with your presence and performance, I already feel better.

KUN DGA' smiles back calmly.

KUN DGA'

Don't worry. You will feel better.

KUN DGA' stands up and goes to where it is suggested he sit. The WOMAN offers him a bowl of tea.

KUN DGA' takes a sip.

At this time, RIN CHEN re-enters the room and sits by KUN DGA' and the ASSISTANT. He silently waits for KUN DGA' to initiate a conversation.

KUN DGA'

What did the Mighty One identify? Anything tangible? Anything you think might be the root of the problem? You know, it is not always a thing that disrupts the peaceful order of a family. It could be anything. It could be nagas or other spirits that we cannot see with our eyes. It also might be that one of your family members has dug a hole in a sacred place and angered its protector. You never know. Anyway, what is it for your family?

RIN CHEN

(Turning to the WOMAN)

It was a coral necklace! The Mighty One said it is from the east. Indeed, my wife is from east of this home. She brought it into this

family when we married. The Mighty One spoke as though he had seen it brought into our home. Mother suspected it of being possessed by an evil spirit after she got sick. But I was doubtful. I thought how could a lifeless item inflict pain on living beings? But now that you are here and have said these things, I feel it is possible.

KUN DGA'

Good! Hold to your beliefs. Do as the Mighty One says and your mother will get better. What is more important than curing your mother, right?

RIN CHEN says nothing. He only nods in agreement.

KUN DGA' pats RIN CHEN's left shoulder and then gets up.

KUN DGA'

Well, we should get going. I assume you have nothing else for the Mighty One's attention?

RIN CHEN

We got answers for the problem we wanted solved.

KUN DGA'

Just do as the Mighty One has suggested. Everything will be fine.

RIN CHEN politely bows slightly.

KUN DGA' looks at the ASSISTANT. The ASSISTANT grabs the box from the bed and carries it outside using both hands.

KUN DGA' walks out of RIN CHEN's house.

RIN CHEN and ALL OTHERS follow to see them off.

Ext. outside of RIN CHEN'S house - afternoon

The ASSISTANT goes to KUN DGA's motorcycle and fastens the box

on the rear rack.

The MOTORCYCLE shakes as the ASSISTANT yanks the rope hard to fasten it.

KUN DGA' nears the motorcycle, sticks a pair of keys in the ignition, and the motorcycle starts up.

RIN CHEN comes towards KUN DGA' (already on his motorcycle), holding the coral necklace wrapped in a cloth.

RIN CHEN

(Sincerely)

Spirit medium KUN DGA', this is what the Mighty One has identified. Please take it, to protect us. We're afraid that we are unable to contain whatever it has in it. We want no more suffering.

Ext. on motorcycle - afternoon

KUN DGA'

(Looks at his ASSISTANT)

It's inappropriate. It'll make me look bad. I don't want this to happen you know. I don't want people to think that I take these things. My main goal is help people, no matter rich or poor. You know that, right?

KUN DGA' pushes the coral necklace away as it is presented to him.

RIN CHEN

It's the tradition here. You must take it. Plus, my mother will not feel the problem is gone if you don't take it. It is also what she wants.

RIN CHEN insists and forces it into KUN DGA''s pocket.

KUN DGA' holds the handgrip. This time he does not resist RIN CHEN's offering.

KUN DGA'

Don't worry, I will take it to where it belongs so that it will no longer bring harm to your family.

KUN DGA' looks at the ASSISTANT and gestures with his head.

The ASSISTANT rushes to the motorcycle and sits with his back against KUN DGA's back. He wraps his arms around the box, holding it tight.

RIN CHEN

(Looks at the way the ASSISTANT is sitting on the motorcycle)

Looks kind of dangerous. Can you stay on the motorcycle holding that box?

ASSISTANT

Yeah, but it's the only way to keep the box safe. Have been doing this for years you know so I'm used to it.

After making sure the ASSISTANT is settled on the motorcycle, KUN DGA' turns his head slightly.

KUN DGA'

Ready?

ASSISTANT

Yep. I'm good.

KUN DGA' revs the engine and sets out for home.

Afternoon

KUN DGA' and the ASSISTANT are on the motorcycle, headed toward KUN DGA's home.

The ASSISTANT holds the box tightly, his arms wrapped around it. He concentrates and grips it tight when the motorcycle goes down a bumpy part of the road.

KUN DGA' steers the motorcycle carefully. When the road is less rough, he looks in the rear-view mirror to check the box. When the road gets rough, he avoids holes and rocks that might make the rear rack unstable. While looking in the mirror, he glimpses a woman, waving at the motorcycle. KUN DGA' checks the mirror again.

KUN DGA'

Somebody is waving at us! Did you see that?

ASSISTANT

Yes! Someone is waving at us. Should we stop?

KUN DGA' brakes the motorcycle, makes a U turn, and is soon in front of her.

In front of MTSHO MO - afternoon

The WOMAN is in her late twenties. She wears a pink scarf tied under her chin and no make-up. Her complexion is perfect with a Plateau tan coloring her fair skin. Her eyes are big and bright, radiating innocence. She wears a black T-shirt that innocently presents a well-shaped body. She takes off her headscarf in a show of respect.

MTSHO MO

(Panting)

You must be the spirit medium, KUN DGA'. I'm MTSHO MO, from CHOS SDE Village. People said that the best spirit medium was at RIN CHEN's. I came. I thought I was too late.

KUN DGA'

(Smiles)

What did you want to see me about? Do you need my help?

MTSHO MO intends to kneel, but is immediately stopped by KUN DGA', who has dismounted and is standing in front of MTSHO MO.

KUN DGA'

There's no need for that. Can I help? Just tell me what it is and I will

see what I can do.

As he speaks, KUN DGA' moves closer to MTSHO MO.

MTSHO MO is depressed. Her eyes fill with tears.

MTSHO MO

(In desperation)

It is my husband, TSHE RING. He's getting worse. You must come help us! Please! Like you've helped many others. You are our last chance.

KUN DGA'

(Calmly)

Yes, I heard about him. It's hard when one gets sick. Nothing else matters any more. Seeing people suffer makes me sad. But that's how everything is.

KUN DGA'

(With a compassionate look)

It must be hard for you. I'll come and see what I can do, OK? Don't worry. Things will be all right.

MTSHO MO nods in tears.

After promising to come, KUN DGA' again mounts his motorcycle, holding it steady for the ASSISTANT.

The ASSISTANT follows him and mounts the motorcycle backwards as before, still tightly holding the BOX. Swaying a bit with the ASSISTANT as he gets settled, the BOX almost falls off the motorcycle.

MTSHO MO immediately grabs it, keeping it from falling.
The ASSISTANT smiles.

ASSISTANT

Thanks! It's fine now. Just go home and take good care of your

husband. We'll come help.

MTSHO MO nods.

After the ASSISTANT is all set, KUN DGA' starts the engine. He accelerates and resumes his journey, leaving MTSHO MO far behind, but still visible in the mirror. He checks the rear-view-mirrors, again and again.

As KUN DGA' rides over what he thought was a shallow irrigation ditch that posed no traffic danger to motorcycles. He then loses control of the motorcycle. KUN DGA' and the motorcycle tumble and slide into a muddy, shallow pool. KUN DGA's clothes and the motorcycle are covered in mud.

Meanwhile, the ASSISTANT loses his grip on the motorcycle and, as he falls, he loses control of the BOX.

The BOX hits the ground and breaks. Implements bounce out and scatter everywhere. It is a mess.

The ASSISTANT is frightened, tries to stand up with support from his arms pushing up from the ground, but finds his right hand does not support him.

ASSISTANT

(In pain)

Ouch!

The ASSISTANT looks in the direction of KUN DGA' while struggling to stand up in the mud.

Despite the pain, he manages to push himself up with his other arm. He immediately goes to the box and picks up the scattered implements one by one with his left hand and puts them back in the broken box.

After everything is back in the box, he brings a piece of rope and

wraps it around the box to make a tight knot, using his teeth.

In the meantime, KUN DGA', covered in mud, manages to stand. He looks around and sees no one around but the ASSISTANT.

KUN DGA'

Put that down and help me!

Paying no attention to his muddy clothes KUN DGA' immediately rushes to the fallen motorcycle.

KUN DGA'

Such a shame if anyone sees us!

ASSISTANT

(Looks around)

Don't worry. No one's around.

The motorcycle lies mostly in the mud. The front and rear wheels are still spinning. The mirrors have broken off. The ASSISTANT puts the box by the road. He runs to the motorcycle and grabs the handles.

KUN DGA'

I'll do that. You push from behind!

The ASSISTANT obeys KUN DGA' and immediately goes behind where he stands in mud that covers his shoes.

KUN DGA' grabs the hand grips. His shoes are also in the mud.

ASSISTANT

OK, I'm going to lift and push. Have you got it?

KUN DGA'

Push!

The ASSISTANT lifts and pushes the motorcycle with his left hand. His veins are enlarged and his face is red. Finally, the motorcycle is

on the other side of the ditch.

KUN DGA' steadies the motorcycle on its stand once it is out and wipes at the mud on his clothes.

The ASSISTANT goes to the motorcycle carrying the box. He places it on the rear rack and fastens it.

KUN DGA' helps the ASSISTANT. After securing it, KUN DGA' shakes it to test its stability.

KUN DGA'

Good that you are always by my side. I don't know if I could have managed this alone. Are you all right? Your arm?

ASSISTANT

Don't know. Feels numb. It's probably broken.

KUN DGA' pats the ASSISTANT sympathetically. He straddles the muddy motorcycle and starts it. It starts but then dies. He repeats this several times.

KUN DGA'

Garbage! Doesn't work when we need it the most! It's not the first time!

KUN DGA' slaps the gas tank and gets off.

The ASSISTANT goes to the rear and pushes it with his left hand.

KUN DGA' and his ASSISTANT start off, both pushing the motorcycle.

Ext. in front of a small village shop - dawn

KUN DGA' and the ASSISTANT slowly approach a small village shop. KUN DGA' parks the motorcycle and walks into the shop.

The ASSISTANT waits outside, guarding the motorcycle and the box.

Int. the small village shop - dawn

KUN DGA' raises the door curtain and walks inside.

It's a small shop with little more than several shelves of beverages across from the door. It's more like a beverage shop.

KUN DGA'

Hello? Hello?

KUN DGA' does not spot anyone in the shop. He hears sounds of *mahjong* tiles being slammed on a table and clicking as they are moved about.

MAN A

SAN WAN!

Sounds of mahjong tiles moving on a table are audible.

MAN B

WU WAN!

There's the sound of another tile hitting the table. KUN DGA' hears a barely audible conversation and mixed with it, snatches of a popular Tibetan song.

MAN A

Why were you an asshole last night, not answering my calls? She was desperate last night. It was a done deal if I had been there!

MAN B

You deserve it! I told you to buy that car. It was so cheap! Now you have lost the car and the chance to get laid. Don't blame me!

MAN C

I would've gone to her riding a motorcycle.

MAN B

No way man, it's too far! Plus everyone would have seen you and

gossiped about it. I hate it when people talk about such little things.

KUN DGA' sneaks to the door and peeks inside a small room where the conversation is taking place.

Several YOUNG MEN sit around a *mahjong* table. Everyone is smoking and immersed in playing. A small pile of cash is in the middle of the table. The ROOM is foggy from cigarette smoke.

KUN DGA' noses further into the room to see more and accidentally pushes the door.

The DOOR squeaks. The noise is loud enough to alert the YOUNG MEN inside.

The YOUNG MEN immediately stop playing, and turn their attention to the door.

A YOUNG MAN in his twenties comes to the door, and observes KUN DGA's muddy clothes with a surprised look.

KUN DGA' feels awkward. He turns away to avoid a confrontation.

YOUNG MAN

What do you want?

The YOUNG MAN is a bit annoyed. He does not pay much attention to KUN DGA'.

KUN DGA'

Em...a Coke. Actually two.

The YOUNG MAN goes to the counter, grabs two cans of Coke and places them on the counter.

YOUNG MAN

Six!

KUN DGA' pays and leaves.

The shopkeeper stays to make sure KUN DGA' leaves the shop. He then goes back into the small room.

He gives one can of Coke to the ASSISTANT and drinks one.

KUN DGA'

How much was the car you were talking about? The one your friend was selling?

ASSISTANT

(In the middle of drinking the Coke)

Twenty-five thousand. I think he already sold it but he has another for the same price, I think.

KUN DGA'

Oh really?

KUN DGA' expresses surprise and disbelief. He finishes the drink, throws away the can, goes to the motorcycle, grabs the handgrips, and pushes.

The ASSISTANT follows him. They resume pushing the motorcycle.

KUN DGA' says nothing while pushing the motorcycle. He is thinking.

ASSISTANT

Are you thinking about buying one?

KUN DGA'

I don't know. Is it good?

The ASSISTANT senses KUN DGA' is considering purchasing a car.

ASSISTANT

It's a good car. Actually, a nice one, for the price he is asking. My understanding is that he has a big gambling debt and needs some

cash desperately to pay it off. It's a good opportunity for us.

KUN DGA'

Why hasn't he sold it yet then? I mean if it is a good deal, right?

ASSISTANT

He hasn't told anyone yet. Otherwise someone would have bought it. He was just telling me about it and asking suggestions. He's not sure either. I mean I could easily convince him to sell it to you if you want it.

KUN DGA' does not respond. He keeps walking.

ASSISTANT

It would be a great help. You'd no longer have to endure this kind of unnecessary hardship. Plus, given your current social status, you deserve one, you know. You'd get more respect if you had one.

KUN DGA' does not respond. He continues walking.

ASSISTANT

And...

KUN DGA'

And what? Tell me.

ASSISTANT

(with hesitation)

And you can approach MTSO MO more easily.

KUN DGA' stops and turns back.

KUN DGA'

(with annoyance)

Since when I did I say you could mind my business? Don't overstep your boundaries.

The ASSISTANT says nothing.

KUN DGA', having made sure he has asserted his authority, keeps walking.

Ext. KUN DGA'S house - dawn

KUN DGA' reaches his home pushing the motorcycle. The ASSISTANT is no longer with him. He parks his broken motorcycle in front of the home gate, unlocks the gate, and enters a room. The room has a religious-looking curtain. As soon as he is inside, he takes out the white scarf RIN CHEN offered him. He places it on an old shelf with numerous similar white and yellow scarves and stares at them for a while.

He walks into the next room and closes the door. He opens a drawer and takes out a bundle of cash in various denominations, which he counts slowly and with care, bill by bill. Then he puts the bundle back in the drawer. He goes to the yard, takes a phone from his pocket, and dials.

Ext. in front of KUN DGA'S house - early morning

A dog on a chair outside KUN DGA's door barks violently. Immediately, there is loud knocking on KUN DGA's door. BANG! BANG! BANG!

Swinging the door open KUN DGA' sees the ASSISTANT standing in front of him, carrying his bandaged arm in a sling around his neck, but wearing a big smile. Behind him is a silver sedan and in front of the car stands a CAR DEALER.

KUN DGA' looks at the ASSISTANT.

KUN DGA'

(Curious and a bit excited)

Is that the car?

ASSISTANT

Yes, that's the car. See if you like it. It's a good one like I told you.

Check for yourself.

KUN DGA' walks to the sedan and checks it carefully. He inspects the rear lights, door, and mirrors, one by one. He then kicks the tires as if he knows a lot about inspecting cars. He finally takes the driver's seat and grasps the steering wheel.

KUN DGA'

(Satisfied)

Nice, right? Didn't know getting a car could be so easy.

The CAR DEALER confidently walks toward KUN DGA'.

CAR DEALER

So what do you think? Do you like it? I mean for 25,000. It's not much for you, I guess.

KUN DGA'

(Not looking at the CAR DEALER, still checking the car)

Well, I think so. Would it serve me well on rugged roads, in mountain villages?

CAR DEALER

(Confidently)

Of course, it's got four wheels. Not two. And it's got fine shock absorbers - ten times better than a motorcycle's. You'd feel very comfortable, like sitting on a moving sofa. More importantly, it doesn't break arms.

The CAR DEALER grins and looks at the ASSISTANT.

KUN DGA' turns around and looks at the ASSISTANT, but does not smile. He is annoyed.

With a glance from KUN DGA', the ASSISTANT, whose right arm is in a white sling around his neck, walks slowly to him. Sitting by KUN DGA' he talks in hushed tones.

ASSISTANT

It's a good offer. Twenty-five thousand can't buy a car in such good condition. I know him. We're good friends. That's why. It is a friend-to-friend deal. For this price, I am positive someone will take it by this afternoon. In fact, several people have called to see the car. Know what I mean? I'd sure buy it if I had the money, you know?

The ASSISTANT turns and calls out to the CAR DEALER.

ASSISTANT

How many people did you say had called to see the car?

CAR DEALER

Three. I know all of them well, too. They're my friends. If it wasn't for you, I'd not have come all the way down here with the car. I could easily sell it in town. You know that.

ASSISTANT

I know.

KUN DGA' listens, but deliberately ignores this conversation. Still in the front seat, he sticks his head out the car window and looks at the ASSISTANT.

KUN DGA'

Do you think it's a good car?

ASSISTANT

(Without hesitation)

It's a very good car. I mean, given the price.

Hearing them murmur, the CAR DEALER shouts.

CAR DEALER

Does he want it or not? I'll sell it to one of the others if he doesn't. You said he had the money to buy it!

KUN DGA' is a bit annoyed. He looks at the CAR DEALER.

KUN DGA'

Don't be so pushy, kid. Have some patience.

KUN DGA' gets out of the car and walks to the CAR DEALER.

KUN DGA'

Cut the price a bit man. I know it's a good car, given the price, as you said, but it's second-hand. A second-hand car is always second-hand. No matter how good it is, right? You know a lot about cars. I'm sure.

ASSISTANT

That's true.

KUN DGA' takes a pack of cigarettes from his pocket, pulls one out and gives it to the CAR DEALER certain that he smokes.

The CAR DEALER takes it. Immediately, KUN DGA' pulls a lighter from his right shirt pocket and lights the cigarette for the CAR DEALER, as though he is in service to the CAR DEALER who bends forward a bit to light his cigarette.

KUN DGA'

What do you say? It's business, yeah? I mean there's always room for negotiations, right? Right?

He makes sure the CAR DEALER hears it.

The ASSISTANT forces a smile.

KUN DGA'

Come on man! You look like you've been in the business for a while. You know bargaining is a must for any business. Don't be rigid about it. Let's close the deal today. Yeah?

CAR DEALER

Well... But...

KUN DGA' interrupts again.

KUN DGA'

Think a bit. It's not only just this deal. You know that, right? It's about making friends and connections as well. More friends with connections means more deals. And I know a lot of people, so... you know what I mean?

The CAR DEALER keeps smoking. He considers what KUN DGA' has just said.

KUN DGA'

Wait a second.

KUN DGA' goes into his room and comes out with a pile of nicely bundled ten and fifty *yuan* bills.

KUN DGA'

Here! This is all I've got. It's 20,000.

KUN DGA' hands it to the CAR DEALER.

CAR DEALER

No. That's way too low.

KUN DGA'

You gotta make concessions sometimes to reach a deal or make a friend, you know. You look young. You gotta learn these things to survive and succeed. I'm older than you and have been through a whole lot more. I know more about these things. What do you say?

KUN DGA' walks the CAR DEALER to the car.

KUN DGA'

Twenty thousand is about right for this car. The car needs new tires. If you keep driving like this, it will damage the car, or even worse, you'll get in an accident, which will no longer be a matter of money. So, it's a good deal for both of us. Don't you agree?

CAR DEALER

No. It's not possible.

The CAR DEALER looks at the ASSISTANT.

KUN DGA' also looks at the ASSISTANT and signals. The ASSISTANT comes to KUN DGA'.

KUN DGA'

(In hushed tones)

You are friends. Maybe you can negotiate a better deal?

ASSISTANT

(In hushed tone)

He seems determined, but let me see if I can do anything.

The ASSISTANT goes to the CAR DEALER.

KUN DGA' watches them as they go to a corner. When he is sure they cannot see him, he sneaks around the car and lets some air out of the front tires. As air escapes from the tires KUN DGA' sneaks back to his room. The CAR DEALER and the ASSISTANT do not see him.

After a short while the ASSISTANT and the CAR DEALER return. They don't see KUN DGA', who has gone into his home and is on the phone.

KUN DGA'

20,000? Okay. I got it! Thanks! I just wanted to know how much he owes you.

KUN DGA' sees them coming. He puts away his phone and steps out of his home with a matter-of-fact attitude.

KUN DGA'

(Looks at the CAR DEALER)

You guys done talking? How much did you decide on?

The ASSISTANT comes over to KUN DGA' and pulls him aside.

ASSISTANT

He has agreed to give you the car for 24,500. That is the lowest price.

KUN DGA' looks at the ASSISTANT.

KUN DGA'

(Shows a look of disappointment)

That's kind of challenging for me.

KUN DGA' walks and kicks the tires again.

KUN DGA'

(In pretense)

Wait! This tire is flat. It must be leaking.

He walks around, kicking the tires one by one.

KUN DGA'

This one, too! I thought you said this was a good deal! Are you trying to cheat me? Both the CAR DEALER and the ASSISTANT check the tires.

CAR DEALER

(Nervous)

They weren't like this. There has never been a problem before.

The CAR DEALER squats and places his right ear on the side of tire.

CAR DEALER

I don't hear anything. We must have driven on something sharp on our way here. I don't think it's a big problem.

KUN DGA'

I hope so. I hope you aren't trying to cheat me. That would be foolish.

The ASSISTANT immediately comes to KUN DGA'.

ASSISTANT

He would never do that. He has never cheated anyone.

KUN DGA'

(With a serious look)

Cheats don't call themselves cheats. But it's good to hear.

He walks to the CAR DEALER near the parked car.

KUN DGA'

So what do you say? How about my suggested price? Let's close the deal at 20,000.

CAR DEALER

That's too low.

KUN DGA'

Look, I didn't get angry when you tried to cheat me.

CAR DEALER

I didn't try to cheat you.

KUN DGA'

And I didn't try to find problems with your car so that I could get a lower bargain. That's what many people do, right?

ASSISTANT

That's true.

KUN DGA'

So, we have two options. One, you fix the tires and come back for the deal you want or let's close the deal now and I'll fix whatever problems the car has. What do you think?

The CAR DEALER looks at the ASSISTANT.

ASSISTANT

(In hushed tones to the CAR DEALER)

No one would come here just to fix tires. It's just too far and not worth their time. They might do it when they had no business at all. But waiting for such a time would take days if not weeks.

CAR DEALER

(In hushed tones)

But I cannot wait several days. I have to pay my debt. You know that.

KUN DGA' comes to them amid their conversation.

KUN DGA'

I know the person you owe money to. In some ways he's a good man, but not a good man to offend. I'm sure you know that. I suggest you close the deal and be done with him. As I said, there's no need to anger savages like him.

The CAR DEALER looks at the ASSISTANT who ignores him.

CAR DEALER

So be it. Let's do it!

The CAR DEALER gives him the keys.

CAR DEALER

Here're the keys. It's yours now. I have no more to do with it.

KUN DGA' takes the car keys and gives him the prepared money.

KUN DGA'

It's 20,000. Count it.

The CAR DEALER takes the money, counts it, shakes hands with KUN DGA', and then leaves with the ASSISTANT.

After making sure they have definitely gone, KUN DGA' inflates the

front tires with a tire pump.

Int. car dealer's car – later that same morning

The CAR DEALER has parked on a roadside. The ASSISTANT and the CAR DEALER are in the front seat, face-to-face, arguing loudly, which can be heard outside.

It's raining. Raindrops relentlessly strike the windshield. Against this background sound the two converse.

ASSISTANT

(Annoyed)

We agreed to sell the car for 25,000 so that I could get my share. KUN DGA' sold the coral necklace for 15,000 and he gave me nothing! Nothing! You know how that feels? As friends, you and I agreed to overprice your worn-out car so that you could get a better deal and I could get what I deserved! If you were going to sell it for 20,000, why did we even bother to plan that accident? Do you know how many hours I spent making that ditch deeper for the accident? Plus, I broke my arm while executing that plan! When money is involved, you seem to change quickly.

CAR DEALER

I tried to sell it for 25,000, but he wouldn't buy it for that price. You saw that too! We had no other options! Worse, he knew the man I owe money to and when it was due. You know what would have happened if I didn't repay the money on the day it was due. The amount I owed would have doubled!

ASSISTANT

(Still angry)

I could have convinced him! You should have consulted me before you made your decision!

CAR DEALER

Come on man! It's already a done deal. I'll make up your loss! You know I will. This is for your help.

The CAR DEALER turns and takes something out, and hands it to the ASSISTANT. It's some cash.

The ASSISTANT puts it in his pocket. He slams the door and leaves.

Int. KUN DGA'S house – later in the day.

KUN DGA' sits in his room. He smokes.

The ASSISTANT comes in.

KUN DGA'

Come on in. Take a seat.

The ASSISTANT sits.

KUN DGA'

How is your arm? Any better?

ASSISTANT

Yes, a bit better. But I still can't move it really well.

KUN DGA'

I'm really sorry about the accident. You know it was not intentional.

ASSISTANT

That's OK.

KUN DGA' stands up from his chair and walks to a drawer. He takes out some cash.

KUN DGA'

Here. I hope this will help you. Rest until your arm gets better. I'll let you know when I need your help.

The ASSISTANT nervously stands up.

ASSISTANT

Are you firing me? You know you are my only source of income!

KUN DGA'

No. Why would you think that?

ASSISTANT

I don't know. It just feels like that.

KUN DGA'

(Calmly)

Don't worry. I wouldn't fire a dutiful, honest, and loyal person like you. Just take the money and take some days off. I'll call you when I need you.

KUN DGA' hands some cash to the ASSISTANT.

The ASSISTANT takes it while looking a bit uncomfortable.

KUN DGA'

Go now. I have someone coming to visit.

The ASSISTANT leaves.

KUN DGA' smokes and watches the ASSISTANT leaving through a window. He then goes back and sits.

Ext. in front of KUN DGA' house – late morning

KUN DGA' carefully stretches a white scarf. He ties each end to a side mirror. After he is done, he examines it carefully. Realizing something is not quite right, he walks back to the car and adjusts the scarf. He is very meticulous.

After making sure everything is perfect, he goes into house and comes out with a new metal box that he has just bought. He places the box carefully in the car trunk and shuts it. The trunk does not close. He reopens the trunk, adjusts the box several times from different angles until finally it fits.

Int. KUN DGA'S car - day

After preparations, he sits in the front seat and starts the car. The car's engine is on. He holds the steering wheel with both hands for a while and takes a deep breath.

He looks around for the gearshift. It is on his right. He grabs the gear, carefully reads the carved shift positions and places it in first gear. He releases the clutch. Once it is released, the engine pulls the car forward but is abruptly jerked to a stop by the hand brake, which he had forgotten to release. The car engine dies.

KUN DGA'

(With a look of nervousness and in hushed tones)

Fucking stupid!

Immediately, KUN DGA' restarts the engine and tries again to drive it. This time KUN DGA' steps on the accelerator pedal too hard. The car makes a strange sound. KUN DGA' releases the clutch carefully. The car moves forward a bit and dies.

KUN DGA' restarts the car and tries again. The car slowly moves forward. KUN DGA's tense look disappears. He is now less nervous but very careful, shifting his attention to the road ahead and the steering wheel.

Ext. on the village road - midday

The car moves slowly down the road. KUN DGA' is still very focused. His body is rigid. He doesn't look around. At a turn, he sees a VILLAGER, in his forties, working on the roadside with a shovel. When he sees the car, he stops working.

KUN DGA' slowly stops the car by the farmer and rolls down the window.

KUN DGA'

Unusually hot, huh?

VILLAGER

Yes indeed, Spirit Medium.

KUN DGA'

You shouldn't be working on such a hot day, you know. You should get some rest.

KUN DGA' turns aside, grabs a bottle of water, and gives to him.

KUN DGA'

Here. Take this. It'll cool you down a bit.

The VILLAGER approaches the car and takes the bottle respectfully.

KUN DGA'

I'll leave you be then. Just remember to get some rest.

VILLAGER

(A bit uneasily)

Don't worry, Spirit Medium, I will.

The VILLAGER remains near the car until KUN DGA' rolls up the window and drives off.

The car moves forward a bit faster this time. It stirs dust up into the sky. He plays Tibetan music on the car CD player.

Ext. on the village road - afternoon

The car continues to move slowly along a village road. The music is on. KUN DGA' is relaxed.

At a turn, KUN DGA' sees a motorcycle parked in the distance. One person is picking up what looks like boxes while another is stacking them on the rear of the motorcycle. He moves close to the motorcycle, gives a long honk and parks right behind the motorcycle.

Leaving the engine running he gets out of the front seat, goes to the

trunk, and takes out a new rope.

The COUPLE turn in the direction of the car and KUN DGA'.

KUN DGA' walks directly to the COUPLE.

KUN DGA'

Here! Take this! It might help a bit.

KUN DGA' stretches out his hand and hands the rope to the husband, whose hat and clothes are completely covered in dust.

COUPLE

It is Spirit Medium, KUN DGA'. We didn't recognize you!

KUN DGA'

It is OK. I just wanted to help you.

He then helps them fasten the boxes on the rear rack.

KUN DGA'

There you go. Now it's all well fastened. Just be careful when you ride.

COUPLE

We will.

KUN DGA' slowly gets back into the car and leaves the couple.

Ext. near MTSHO MO'S home - day

KUN DGA' slowly drives the car toward a new village. It is located in a valley.

KUN DGA' sings along with the music and taps the steering wheel with his fingers. Coming close to the village, through the windshield, KUN DGA' sees a group of YOUNG MEN circling MTSHO MO.

MTSHO MO tries to get away from the group but the YOUNG MEN block her way again and again.

KUN DGA' sees this drama and honks at them several times to scare them off.

The YOUNG MEN ignore him.

KUN DGA' does not know what to do so he drives the car toward the crowd. He speeds up.

The YOUNG MEN ignore the car and continue harassing MTSHO MO.

MTSHO MO is helpless in the crowd.

The CAR honks, and continues toward the group of YOUNG MEN.

The YOUNG MEN dodge when they see KUN DGA's car is headed directly toward them.

The CAR hits a wall with a huge crash, knocking down the wall. Dust is everywhere. The car engine dies.

One of the YOUNG MEN rushes to the car, pulls the front door open, and drags KUN DGA' out from the seat.

KUN DGA' does not struggle. Soon he loses a sense of what is going on.

YOUNG MAN

Fuck! This fool was trying to kill us!

The YOUNG MEN swarm over and kick him as he lies sprawled on the ground.

MTSHO MO screams and tries to push them away from KUN DGA'.

ANOTHER YOUNG MAN

Beat him! Let him know who we are.

MTSHO MO

Stop! Stop! You are insane!

MTSHO MO pushes away whoever is beating KUN DGA'.

ONE YOUNG MAN

Thinks he can do anything with a broken-down car! Beat the shit out of him!

One of the YOUNG MEN grabs an empty beer bottle from nearby and hits KUN DGA on the head with it. Blood flows from his head. KUN DGA' becomes unconscious.

MTSHO MO

(Desperate)

Stop! Stop!

Again MTSHO MO pulls away the young men.

KUN DGA' lies unconscious and powerless.

MTSHO MO

Have some respect! He is KUN DGA', the spirit medium!

The YOUNG MEN suddenly pause looking alarmed at one another.

ONE YOUNG MAN

I'm scared!

He makes a serious face. Everyone stops beating KUN DGA'. He then laughs hard!

THE YOUNG MAN

You're the Spirit Medium? You must have magic powers! Like the Monkey King, right? Why didn't you vanish before we hit you? Huh?

The Monkey King² does that. I see, you're not that angry! Let's see what happens when you are agitated. Let's hit him harder!

The YOUNG MEN resume kicking KUN DGA'.

Realizing KUN DGA' is unconscious, one YOUNG MAN pulls away one who is still kicking KUN DGA'.

ONE YOUNG MAN

That's enough. Let's go before we get caught! I don't want to spend time in jail again.

The YOUNG MEN flee, leaving MTSHO MO and the unconscious KUN DGA'.

Weeping, MTSHO MO drags KUN DGA' into her house.

Int. MTSHO MO'S house – morning of the next day

It is now morning of the next day. KUN DGA' has been asleep/unconscious all night. He is lying on a bed, covered with a quilt.

Nearby, MTSHO MO is busy making bread. She kneads the flour. Looking over her shoulder she realizes KUN DGA' is now conscious. She approaches him holding a jacket.

MTSHO MO

(A little startled)

I didn't know you were awake.

MTSHO MO comes closer to KUN DGA'.

MTSHO MO

Are you feeling better? I washed your shirt and jacket. I hope you

² A character in the *Journey to the West*, which was translated (both book and film versions) into Tibetan. The Tibetan-language version of the film remained very popular in 2018.

don't mind. They were covered in blood from yesterday. It was the only thing I could do for you.

MTSHO MO looks outside, indicating where the clothes are. KUN DGA' does the same and sees his shirt and jacket hung over a rope.

MTSHO MO goes into another room. She brings out a shirt and a jacket.

MTSHO MO

These are my husband's. They're new. Wear them for the time being if you don't mind. My husband and you are almost the same size. I think they will fit.

MTSHO MO hands the jacket and shirt to KUN DGA'.

KUN DGA' takes them, inspects them, and then puts them on.

MTSHO MO

I'm really sorry for what happened. It's all my fault. If it wasn't for me, you wouldn't have gotten beat up.

KUN DGA'

Don't worry. Anyone who saw what they were doing to you would have tried to help you.

MTSHO MO

It's hard to tell. Some people just pretend that they don't see. You know how people are these days.

KUN DGA'

That's true. But no matter what, just know it's not your fault. I'll teach these thugs a lesson next time I see them!

MTSHO MO

Just ignore them. They're just crazy losers. I heard that they were moved from their former home place and resettled near our town. They often do nothing but get drunk, get into fights, and

sometimes steal. I heard they just got released from jail. Just ignore them. They aren't worth your attention.

KUN DGA' doesn't say anything. He just fiddles with the jacket.

KUN DGA'

(looking at MTSO MO)

Now that I'm here, tell me more about your husband's situation. Let's me see what I can do about it.

MTSO MO hurries to another room and comes back with a paper box filled with papers, mainly receipts. She places it on the table in front of KUN DGA'.

MTSO MO

(In sadness)

These are receipts from various hospitals. We took him to many hospitals but they haven't made a clear diagnosis. According to some doctors, he doesn't even have any health problems. But the thing is he is sick most of the time. It has been three years and he hasn't gotten any better.

MTSO MO sits with one knee on the floor as a sign of respect, looking at KUN DGA', expecting him to say something.

KUN DGA'

What did they say? Did they say they could cure him? Or that he would get better if they treated him?

KUN DGA' pulls the box a bit closer to him. He stretches a hand into the box, and starts to look at the papers.

MTSO MO

Well, they said he needed to be observed at the hospital. He had IV injections for several days, but there was no sign of him getting better.

KUN DGA' takes out a bunch of papers from the box while MTSO

MO is speaking. He scans them one by one and puts each one on the table when he finishes looking at it.

KUN DGA'

(With a look of sympathy)

That's quite an expense. Wow! Hospitals are totally irresponsible nowadays! They take your money, but you never know what the illness is.

KUN DGA' reaches into the box for more papers. He takes a picture from the bottom of the box and examines it carefully. It is a color picture, featuring MTSO MO and her HUSBAND in heavily decorated Tibetan robes. Both wear big gold wedding rings. MTSO MO wears a gold necklace. Both wear deep smiles.

MTSO MO comes close to KUN DGA', disrupting his attention.

MTSO MO

(With a sad look)

Let me pour you some tea.

MTSO MO hands KUN DGA' a bowl of tea. He takes the tea and scrutinizes her ring finger. He sees only an imprint of a ring. He sips a bit from the bowl.

MTSO MO

(Looking at the picture)

That is the only picture we have. He was healthy then. And we were happy. I just cannot believe how transient that happiness was.

KUN DGA'

(In confidence)

You'll be happy again. Don't worry.

Although her eyes fill with tears MTSO MO seems happier. She kowtows to KUN DGA' and leaves the room hurriedly.

KUN DGA' sips tea and then gets up. He goes to the window slowly

and looks at MTSHO MO through the window. MTSHO MO does not see him.

Ext. MTSHO MO'S home yard - morning

She sits at a worn-out aluminum washtub, washing clothes. Her sleeves are folded up to the elbows. She is occupied. A pile of clothes has already been washed. There is another pile waiting to be washed on her side. While washing, MTSHO MO occasionally wipes sweat from her glistening forehead.

KUN DGA' smokes, watches MTSHO MO for a while, and then goes outside where he carefully examines MTSHO MO's home yard.

Everything is in order - the yard is well-swept. There is no sign of garbage. A family altar emits puffs of white smoke. It swirls up into the blue sky. KUN DGA' raises his head and looks into the sky.

I/E. KUN DGA'S dented car - afternoon

KUN DGA' and MTSHO MO are in the front seat of the car that moves slowly on an unpaved bumpy road. They do not converse. KUN DGA' is focused on driving.

Looking through the window MTSHO MO sees a pair of birds flying. She is preoccupied.

KUN DGA' glances at MTSHO MO. MTSHO MO does not notice. She keeps looking outside.

KUN DGA'

We're on the right path to the town, right?

MTSHO MO turns back.

MTSHO MO

Yes.

KUN DGA'

OK. That's good.

KUN DGA' turns his attention back to the road. He takes out a cigarette from his pocket and lights it as he drives. He isn't happy. The dented car moves slowly along the unpaved road.

Ext. car repair shop - same day

The car eventually reaches a town and approaches a yard with an iron gate with a big sign that reads REPAIR in Chinese. KUN DGA' drives the car into the yard and parks it behind several broken-down vehicles. He pulls the handbrake and turns off the car engine.

Int. car repair shop - yard

KUN DGA' gets out, locks the car, and walks into a small room nearby. He comes out with a REPAIRMAN. He talks with him while making hand gestures. It is not audible. He looks occasionally in MTSHO MO's direction during the conversation.

MTSHO MO looks at KUN DGA' and the repairman in the distance. When KUN DGA' looks at her, she avoids eye contact. She turns away.

KUN DGA' finally shakes hands with the repairman and walks over to MTSHO MO.

KUN DGA'

(Smiling with satisfaction)

He sounds like a good man. I like him. I said I'd come and drink with him sometime.

MTSHO MO does not look at KUN DGA', but at the dented car with a sense of guilt.

KUN DGA'

Don't worry. It's all taken care of.

KUN DGA' comes nearer MTSHO MO.

MTSHO MO does not respond, lowers her head a bit.

KUN DGA'

Come! Let's get something to eat. I'm starving.

KUN DGA' walks ahead along the road, looking back occasionally to make sure she follows.

MTSHO MO hesitantly follows him.

KUN DGA' leads MTSHO MO to a RESTAURANT located across from the car repair shop. It has a sign that reads *KING OF NOODLES* in Chinese.

Waiting at the door, KUN DGA' pulls it open for MTSHO MO.

MTSHO MO is at a loss. She stands still.

KUN DGA'

Go inside!

MTSHO MO enters. KUN DGA' follows.

Int. restaurant - day

KUN DGA' leads MTSHO MO to a table by the window. He roughly pulls out a chair for himself. The chair produces an ear-piercing squeal as he drags it out. KUN DGA' sits.

MTSHO MO also pulls out a chair, but with care and quietly. She sits.

KUN DGA'

About your husband...

As KUN DGA' is about to speak, a WAITRESS comes to the table. She interrupts.

WAITRESS

(Pours tea)

What would you two like to eat?

KUN DGA' turns to the WAITRESS

KUN DGA'

Just a moment. We're not ready yet

The WAITRESS says nothing and leaves.

KUN DGA' turns to MTSO MO with a serious look and puts his hands on the table.

KUN DGA'

About your husband, I encountered a similar situation. I think I can help you, but the thing is, you must believe in me. You must have no doubts and questions about whatever I do as a spirit medium. Ultimately, my power to help people and alleviate their suffering only comes to those who unconditionally believe in me. This is the way the superior being who uses me as a medium works. Doubting my actions or the Mighty One brings greater calamities that will not only affect you and your family, but also my reputation. What I really want to tell you is that in the end, it's all about how much you're willing to sacrifice for your husband and your family. Do you think you're ready for that? Do you think you can sacrifice anything to save your husband?

MTSO MO nods.

KUN DGA'

Good. Your husband should know how lucky he is. What I also want you to know is that sometimes destiny is such that even the Mighty One himself is unable to reverse it, not to mention insignificant, ordinary people like us. But don't worry. We always find solutions to our problems. I always do.

MTSHO MO

I have done everything I could to save him. It's all been in vain. I want to do more but there isn't anything I can think of. You are our last hope.

KUN DGA'

If this is the case, if you are determined, then I will come help your family.

The WAITRESS comes to the table again.

Int. KUN DGA'S car – day, after lunch.

KUN DGA' and MTSHO MO are in the repaired car. KUN DGA' parks the car, leaving the engine running in front of a shop, opens the door, and gets out.

KUN DGA'

Just wait for me a bit.

He rushes into the shop. MTSHO MO looks toward the shop through the windshield. She sees KUN DGA' paying at the counter. Before long, he comes out of the shop with a big box in his arms. He walks to the rear of the car, puts the box in the trunk, shuts it with a bang, comes to the front, and gets into the front seat. He sees MTSHO MO is under the weather.

KUN DGA'

(In humor)

I was thinking to have those rascals wash clothes for you when I catch them, but I guess a washing machine will be more obedient, what do you think?

MTSHO MO forces a smile.

KUN DGA' drives forward into a busy street full of cars, motorcycles, and pedestrians. He gradually disappears among the other vehicles.

Int. MTSO MO'S house - night

BACKGROUND CHANTING: A stern, rhythmical chanting pervades the room. A stack of firewood is piled in a corner of the hearth in good order. Fire burns vigorously in the hearth. On the hearth is a cooking pot with a small amount of cooking oil. It is hot and produces a curl of smoke.

Int. MTSO MO'S - on the adobe bed

KUN DGA' again dressed in his spirit medium clothes, chants, drums and shouts.

The oil smoke gradually rises from the cooking pot. It is disrupted all of a sudden by the flames rising from the hearth.

KUN DGA' stands up, drinks a mouthful of water from a bowl placed near him, and goes to the hearth drumming, shaking his body and head with a bit of water in his mouth. He moves gracefully in a mysterious manner toward the pot. When he is about two meters from the pot, he sprays the water from his mouth into the pot. A mushroom-like flame bursts from the pot up to the ceiling as if a firebomb has been ignited.

The flame hits the ceiling and fans out in all directions as if the whole ceiling is on fire.

MOTHER-IN-LAW is shocked and frightened. She looks at the fire and then MTSO MO and KUN DGA'. MTSO MO's eyes are also on the flame. In a moment, the flames diminish and slowly die.

On the hearth, the hot cooking oil still sizzles, producing a trace of smoke.

KUN DGA' takes another mouthful of water and blows it into the pot. Flames again burst out of the pot and hit the ceiling, fanning out in all directions like the previous time, only much more dramatically. The sound of KUN DGA' chanting, drumming, shaking his head and

limbs - it all produces a collection of mysterious sounds.

Ext. MTSHO MO'S house - dusk

KUN DGA's chanting, drumming and bells can be heard outside the house. The lights are on in MTSHO MO's house. KUN DGA's shadow can be seen moving around inside the room. As the sun sets, everything grows dark.

Int. MTSHO MO'S house (all seated) - morning

MTSHO MO weeps in front of KUN DGA' and her MOTHER-IN-LAW. MOTHER-IN-LAW does not say anything. KUN DGA' sips milk tea from a transparent glass. He puts it down and looks at MOTHER-IN-LAW.

KUN DGA'

(Wears a serious face)

I'm sorry about what the Mighty One said. It's really unfortunate, but surely the hard truth is something that we ordinary beings find hard to fathom and accept sometimes. But we must have no questions and doubts about His omniscient powers. As I told you, it's never easy, but whether you choose to trust the Mighty One will determine what is to happen.

MTSHO MO

(Still weeping)

Who'll care for my husband and mother-in-law if I leave? What will people think of me once they hear that I'm possessed by evil - that I am the root of the problem to the family?

KUN DGA'

(Sighs)

Maybe the MIGHTY One has arrangements we don't know about. Just believe in what the Mighty One has arranged. You'll be fine. Your husband will recover.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

Why is life so harsh? We haven't harmed anyone. Why are the weak always the ones to suffer?

MOTHER-IN-LAW shakes her head, wiping tears welling in her eyes. She then stands up and leaves the room shaking her head in sadness. KUN DGA' observes MOTHER-IN-LAW leaving, sips tea, and turns to MTSHO MO.

KUN DGA'

(Serious face again)

There are two other things I need to tell you. They're about you. And I need you to listen carefully. They won't be easy to hear, but I guarantee that if you do what I say, it may change your life and that of your husband.

KUN DGA' looks again at the door. MTSHO MO does not notice.

KUN DGA'

I would rather not tell you about it, it is so harsh given your current situation, but since you wanted my help and I feel very sympathetic to your situation, I don't want to lie to you, you know. You have the right to know everything that I have foreseen through the Mighty One. But remember not to share what I say to anyone, including your husband and mother-in-law. It will hurt their feelings. And they would think ill of me, for good reasons.

MTSHO MO nods.

KUN DGA' looks around again.

KUN DGA'

You see, your mother-in-law - as concerned as she has been about your husband, her son, and the family as a whole - deep inside, she has never approved of your marriage. It is not fair given how much you have sacrificed for the family but you see, this is how life is. I assume you have also sensed it in one way or another, right?

The second thing is about your tutelary deity. I sense through the Mighty One that it is too weak. That is the reason you are vulnerable to many calamities. I assume you have already sensed how unfortunate you are in many ways, unlike others.

MTSHO MO listens.

KUN DGA'

It's like you are weak, you know, and everyone bullies the weak. But the important thing that you need to know is that I can help you. I am able to strengthen the very thing that haunts you so that you will no longer suffer from calamities that you want to get rid of. I am able to share my strength with you. I have done it several times. It takes time. Your husband and MOTHER-IN-LAW will not feel comfortable with it. So try to come to me when they are not home or late at night and I will help you.

Int. MTSHO MO'S home - late that same night

It is extremely quiet at MTSHO MO'S home. All the lights are off except for the light from KUN DGA's cell phone. After a while, a door squeaks open. In the dark, a shadow of a person goes from MTSHO MO's room to that of KUN DGA's. The dim light is on for a while but finally goes out. The sound of a pair of shoes dropping on the floor can be heard.

Ext. MTSHO MO'S home yard - early morning

KUN DGA' comes out from the room in which he has spent the night. He is relaxed and confident as usual. As he comes out, MOTHER-IN-LAW follows him to the gate.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

(Politely)

I hope the breakfast was good. We don't have much to offer.

KUN DGA'

Don't worry. It was great. I could not expect more.

KUN DGA' exits MTSHO MO's home and gets into the front seat of the car parked outside, as if nothing has happened. As soon as he gets in, he rolls down the window for further conversation.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

(Sincerely)

Go safely! We are really honored to have you. Your presence is always welcome.

MOTHER-IN-LAW offers a white scarf and some cash.

KUN DGA'

Be well then. I'd better get going. See you soon! Just let me know if you need any help in the future.

KUN DGA' smiles and rolls the window up.

The ASSISTANT starts the car and slowly drives out of the home yard and joins the main village road.

MOTHER-IN-LAW follows the car and sees it off. KUN DGA' watches her through the rear-view mirror.

MTSHO MO is not present.

INT. MTSHO MO'S parents' home - day

MTSHO MO and her parents are at the dinner table, ready to have dinner. Everyone is seated. MTSHO MO has her head down and is obviously feeling guilty.

MTSHO MO'S FATHER

(Eats rice)

Look at you now! You know clearly that your mother and I were totally against your marriage because TSHE RING has genetic bad body odor. We swore in the name of Buddha that if you disregarded our wishes and went off with that man we would never care about your future life.

MTSHO MO's FATHER looks at his wife. She does not say anything, but gestures, indicating that she agrees with her husband.

MTSHO MO

You know it was not TSHE RING who did this to me, but you still blame him for every misfortune that happens to me!

MTSHO MO'S FATHER

Who did this to you then? Tell me! Let me guess, you fell on the ground, right?

MTSHO MO

(Completely defeated)

You don't know what I've been going through.

MTSHO MO starts eating without looking at her parents.

MTSHO MO

Plus, it has been years since I married. And nobody cares about it anymore! It's just bad body odor! Many people do a small operation to get rid of it! You know that! Why would you say such a cruel thing so many years later?

MTSHO MO'S FATHER

(Not giving in)

It's genetic! It's in the blood. You can never be rid of it. It passes down, like a disease. That means your children will have it. So actually I'm glad.

MTSHO MO interrupts in anger.

MTSHO MO

(Agitated)

Glad about what?

MTSHO MO drops her chopsticks and bowl on the dining table in irritation and defiance of her father.

Her FATHER gets louder and more serious!

MTSHO MO'S FATHER

The fact that you don't have children who will stain our lineage!

MTSHO MO's MOTHER elbows her husband several times, trying to stop him from verbally hurting MTSHO MO.

MTSHO MO'S FATHER

(In irritation)

What? Am I wrong?

He looks at his wife in feigned innocence.

MTSHO MO'S FATHER

Am I wrong? A lot of people think the same way. It's not just me. You know that!

MTSHO MO gets up without saying anything, goes into the other room, slams the door, and cries loudly inside.

MTSHO MO'S FATHER

(Turns to MTSHO MO'S mother)

I can't believe I've raised such a rebellious girl! See how much you've spoiled her. I told you this might happen one day!

MTSHO MO's MOTHER looks at her husband and says nothing. She accepts the blame.

MTSHO MO's FATHER puts his bowl down on the table in disappointment, stands up abruptly, and leaves the room. He does not push his chair under the table as he usually does.

MTSHO MO's MOTHER closes the door behind him and goes toward MTSHO MO's room. Hearing her weeping inside, she knocks on MTSHO MO's door with care.

MTSHO MO does not respond. She continues to weep.

MTSHO MO'S MOTHER

You know your FATHER always cares about you. He's angry but it doesn't mean he hates you. That's the way he shows he cares about you. All parents do that. You'll know what I am talking about when you have children of your own.

MTSHO MO does not respond. She continues weeping.

Not knowing what to do, MTSHO MO's MOTHER stands at the door and listens cautiously. Knowing MTSHO MO will not open the door, she finally leaves.

Int. MTSHO MO'S parents' home - early morning

MTSHO MO gets up and leaves her room and her parents' house. Hearing the door close, MTSHO MO's MOTHER gets up and looks through the window.

MTSHO MO's FATHER is asleep.

MTSHO MO is out of the house and hurries toward the street.

Ext. in the street - morning

MTSHO MO goes into a shop with a big sign that reads "Pharmacy" and comes out with a bag of pills.

Ext. bus station - morning

MTSHO MO goes to the ASSISTANT's side of a white van, hands over the bag, then takes some cash out of her pocket and gives it to the ASSISTANT.

Int. MTSHO MO'S room in her parents' home – later that morning

MTSHO MO folds quilts, straightens the beds, sweeps the floor, and cleans the table. While wiping a counter, she accidentally knocks over her wedding picture that she showed to KUN DGA'. It falls on the

floor. The glass shatters.

MTSHO MO drops the broom and bends over. As she tries to clean up the broken glass, she cuts her index finger. Drops of blood land on her husband's face in the picture.

Grabbing the picture, MTSHO MO tries to wipe it clean with her palm. Instead, she smears blood all over the picture.

Now frantic, MTSHO MO runs to the kitchen and gets a basin of water. She dips her cut hand in the water, trying to wash away the blood. The water turns red. With great force she rapidly scrubs the stained picture. She does not stop. The image of her husband starts to fade. As it does so, she scrubs harder and weeps with anger and despair.

The picture warps and the image totally disappears. MTSHO MO cries, and seeing her reflection in the basin, hits the water with her hands. The water splashes all over her face. MTSHO MO's hair and face are soaked. Water drips from the wet hair, drop by drop.

Ext. MTSHO MO'S parents' home - late afternoon

Hearing car honking outside, MTSHO MO's MOTHER immediately goes to a window and peeks out.

She sees MTSHO MO conversing with someone in a silver car. It is KUN DGA'. MTSHO MO does not know she is being observed.

KUN DGA' and MTSHO MO talk for a while, inaudibly. KUN DGA' leans over and opens the car door.

MTSHO MO reluctantly gets in and they drive away.

Ext. MTSHO MO'S parents' home (at front door) - night

MTSHO MO comes back. Her MOTHER stands at the door blocking the entrance.

MTSHO MO'S MOTHER

(A bit angry and unsure)

Tell Mother what is going on. It can't go on like this. Who is the man you were with? Be honest with your mother, woman to woman.

MTSHO MO

What do you mean, Mother? Nothing is going on. He is nobody, just a friend who comes to see me. OK?

MTSHO MO tries to enter the house despite her MOTHER's attempt to block her, but her MOTHER again blocks the way.

MTSHO MO'S MOTHER

(Skeptical)

A friend? None of your friends came to see you before. It seems you've been making some good friends since you married, huh? Tell me the truth, are you having an affair?

MTSHO MO

(Annoyed)

What're you talking about, Mother? Why are your thoughts so twisted? Why don't you believe me?

MTSHO MO is angry. She pushes into the house, trying to avoid confronting her MOTHER who then gives in, but follows MTSHO MO to her room.

Int. MTSHO MO'S room at her parents' home - night

MTSHO MO sits on the bed, facing away from her mother.

MTSHO MO'S MOTHER

(A bit relaxed)

Listen, MTSHO MO. Mother doesn't know much. In fact, Mother knows very little about the world. But I assure you that if you're doing what I think you're doing, then you are on the wrong path. You're on your way to self-destruction. Trust your mother, only through loyalty and honesty can you earn a good family and life.

MTSHO MO

Mother! It is not what you think! I told you. Just don't bother me with this!

MTSHO MO stands up, annoyed and impatient.

MTSHO MO'S MOTHER

(A bit annoyed)

Then tell me what it is! I am worried about you, MTSHO MO! You never came home before your husband got sick, but now you're here when you are least expected. You said you wanted to borrow money from your FATHER to help your husband, but I haven't seen you making any effort. Instead, you act very oddly. You don't talk to us, you don't eat much, and now you even see a man. What's going on MTSHO MO? Is there something we should know?

MTSHO MO

Mother, it's really nothing. You're thinking too much. He's just a friend. You're over-reacting.

MTSHO MO'S MOTHER

(A bit angry)

I hope you're not fooling yourself.

MTSHO MO's MOTHER leaves the room.

Ext. gas station – that same night

KUN DGA' drives his car to a gas station. He gets out to refuel his car. He sees a motorcycle leaving the station.

KUN DGA'

One hundred.

YOUNG WORKER

OK. Actually, can I refuel you car with this?

He brings a bucket used to refuel motorcycles.

KUN DGA'

Why?

YOUNG WORKER

It's not that this is bad quality. It just happened that a man wanted to refuel his motorcycle without realizing he had forgotten his wallet. So I was wondering if I can refuel your car with this.

KUN DGA'

I see. Well, I think I could help you with that, but you know it means that I have to trust that the gas inside the bucket is worth whatever amount you say it's worth and that it is good. You know it's kind of hard given how tricky people are these days. You might be an honest kid, but I don't really know. Looks are deceptive, if you know what I mean.

YOUNG WORKER

It's worth fifty. There's no need for me to lie to you.

KUN DGA'

I'll let you refuel it for thirty.

YOUNG WORKER

It's worth fifty. You must have seen the motorcycle when you drove in.

KUN DGA'

No, actually I didn't pay attention. Look kid, it's midnight. I assure you, at this time of night, not many people come here to refuel, especially motorcycles. Cars? Possibly, but the drivers won't accept your proposal. Trust me. I'm a car owner. I know these things. Plus, gas tends to evaporate quickly if you leave it in a bucket. By morning, it'll all be gone. You look like a smart kid. I'm sure you know better than me. What do you say? I'll come here often to refuel if that helps raise you salary or anything.

The YOUNG WORKER pauses then comes forward with the bucket.

YOUNG WORKER

All right.

KUN DGA'

All right then.

KUN DGA' goes around the car quickly and opens the fuel tank cap by himself. The YOUNG WORKER refuels the car.

KUN DGA'

That'll be enough for the night. Thank you! You're a smart kid.

After handing over thirty RMB, KUN DGA' leaves the station honking as he leaves.

Int. MTSO MO'S parents' home - late that same night

MTSO MO's PARENTS are asleep. MTSO MO's FATHER snores heavily.

MTSO MO's MOTHER hears the door open. She gets up without alarming her husband, and listens to MTSO MO's movements at the bedroom door. When she hears MTSO MO open the gate and then close it, she gets up immediately and follows her.

MTSO MO goes outside, bobs down, and urinates.

MTSO MO's MOTHER listens carefully. She hears MTSO MO peeing and then vomiting. Knowing MTSO MO is coming back to the house, her MOTHER rushes back to her room.

Int. MTSO MO'S room at her parents' house - morning

MTSO MO is asleep.

The room is extremely quiet with only the sound of a clock on the table ticking. The door suddenly bangs open. MTSO MO's FATHER rushes in, like a tiger about to pounce.

Seeing her FATHER about to attack, MTSO MO is startled. She curls up in the bed with her hair in a mess.

MTSO MO's FATHER runs directly toward her in a rage.

MTSO MO'S FATHER

You shameless...!

He grabs her by the hair, and drags her down to the floor with the bedding still wrapped around her.

MTSO MO'S FATHER

Shameless! I knew you were up to no good. You always bring turmoil to the family - before and now. Even if you don't care about yourself, you should let your mother and me live in peace and dignity. Shameless! You're no better than a beast!

MTSO MO's FATHER drags her toward the door.

MTSO MO grabs her FATHER's hands with her hands. She is in great pain. She screams and cries, trying to loosen his hands.

Her FATHER doesn't let go, dragging her outside the house.

MTSO MO'S MOTHER

(shouts)

Just let her be. Why are you so cruel to your own daughter?

MTSO MO's MOTHER grabs his other hand, trying to stop him from hurting her.

MTSO MO's FATHER pushes MTSO MO's MOTHER aside with a violent swing of his arm and she falls to the ground.

Seeing his wife on the ground, MTSO MO's FATHER loosens his grip on MTSO MO's hair. Returning to MTSO MO's room, he comes out with her belongings which he throws at her

MTSHO MO'S FATHER

Get out of my sight! You are not my child. Don't ever come back!
Look at what a mess you have made!

MTSHO MO's FATHER pulls MTSHO MO's MOTHER inside the house and shuts the door on MTSHO MO.

MTSHO MO sits on the ground weeping in agony at this humiliation. Still weeping, she picks up the scattered items one by one.

Ext. on the street outside the pharmacy – that same day

MTSHO MO leaves her belongings at the door of the pharmacy she visited earlier and goes inside.

DOCTOR

The usual ones for your husband?

MTSHO MO

Yes.

The DOCTOR gets several different pills from the clinic shelves and puts them in a plastic bag. He then brings the bag to the counter and hands it to MTSHO MO, who takes it. She lingers.

The DOCTOR notices that MTSHO MO does not leave.

DOCTOR

Anything else?

MTSHO MO

(In embarrassment)

A... a... pregnancy tester too.

MTSHO MO does not look at the DOCTOR. She does not know what his reaction will be.

Without hesitation, the DOCTOR goes to the other side of the counter

and comes back with a pregnancy test kit and hands it to MTSHO MO.

DOCTOR

Ask the younger ones if you don't know how to use it.

MTSHO MO still does not look at the doctor. She drops a fifty *yuan* bill on the counter.

The DOCTOR pulls out a drawer and shuffles through some bills of money with his head down. He raises his head and holds some change in his hand. He realizes MTSHO MO is gone.

Ext. on busy street – the same morning

MTSHO MO is now back on a busy street. Carrying her belongings on her back, she trudges toward the bus station. On the way, she bumps into several people who are walking in the opposite direction. As MTSHO MO bumps into people, some of her belongings fall on the ground. She picks them up, and keeps walking. They fall again to the ground.

MTSHO MO bends over and tries to pick them up again. She sees a hand grabbing the belongings. She raises her head and looks at the person. It is her MOTHER.

Tears in her eyes, MTSHO MO's MOTHER lifts what has fallen and puts it on MTSHO MO's back.

Ext. bus station – that same day

MTSHO MO'S MOTHER

(Sad and worried)

Who is the father? Tell me the truth. There's no need to lie at this point. I'm your mother, I care about you.

MTSHO MO

(Weeps)

The guy you saw the other day.

MTSHO MO'S MOTHER

Who is he?

MTSHO MO

(Hesitant)

He's the spirit medium. He told me that he could save TSHE RING. I tried to stop him when he tried to... but...

MTSHO MO'S MOTHER

Last night, too?

MTSHO MO nods as she weeps.

Int. a restaurant opposite the bus station – that same day

MTSHO MO's FATHER stands at a restaurant window across from the bus station. He looks through the window at MTSHO MO and her mother talking in the distance.

Ext. bus station – that same day

MTSHO MO'S MOTHER

(With a look of worry)

Like I said, don't ever tell what happened to anyone, including your husband. Think about your own marriage and the reputation of our family. I know it's very hard for you to bear all of this, but it's best for all of us.

MTSHO MO does not say anything.

MTSHO MO'S MOTHER

Plus, they are powerful. They will crush you. I heard from LHA MO, a woman from a mountain village, that a woman in her village had also been victimized by a religious figure. She went against him publicly. She tried to bring him to justice. But nothing happened in her favor. Instead, her husband ended up getting very sick. I heard

the spirit medium used magic on her husband. So, don't do anything like that.

Your FATHER and I think it's in everyone's best interest if you keep it to yourself. You know what I mean? You're an adult, no longer little MTSO MO. OK?

MTSO MO's MOTHER brings out a roll of cash, grabs MTSO MO's hand and hands it to her.

MTSO MO's FATHER sees MTSO MO get in a bus and his wife saying goodbye to her daughter.

Int. MTSO MO'S husband's home yard

Garbage is scattered all over the yard. At times, trash is carried and tossed by the wind into every corner of the unswept courtyard. There is no smoke from the chimney or even from the family altar. Shelves and the family hearth are covered in layers of dust. The cooking pot at the center of the hearth is filled with unwashed dishes with flies buzzing about. Dry coughing comes from one of the rooms.

Int. MTSO MO'S husband's bedroom - morning

It is a small and dark traditional Tibetan room with circles of stain on its walls from the leaking roof.

MOTHER-IN-LAW kneels in front of the hearth, trying to make a fire. She blows on a bunch of grass that she set on fire. The fire does not catch.

The room is smothered in smoke. Nothing in the room is clearly visible.

TSHE RING lies on a bed in the corner. He coughs constantly and harder and harder each time.

MTSHO MO'S HUSBAND, TSHE RING

(Hushed and desperate tone)

Water! Water!

MOTHER-IN-LAW, who is trying to make a fire, finds her way to the shelves, picks up a thermos and glass and moves to the bed. When she is near the bed, she missteps and falls to the floor.

The thermos and glass she holds also fall to the floor and break with a shattering sound.

MOTHER-IN-LAW moans in great pain.

Sensing the accident, TSHE RING struggles on the bed and tries to turn to see what has happened to his mother. He falls to the floor.

MOTHER-IN-LAW cries harder.

I/E. KUN DGA'S car - day - raining hard

KUN DGA'

(On the phone)

It's good he's better now. Just let me know if I can do anything else.

He listens for a while.

KUN DGA'

No, it's OK. It's not a big deal.

Something bangs loudly on the car window, startling KUN DGA'. Looking through the window he sees MTSHO MO completely soaked from the rain. She is tense and beating the car window as if she has gone crazy.

MTSHO MO

Liar! You Liar!

MTSHO MO cries harder each time she hits the window. She grabs

the door handle to open the car door but the door is locked. She cannot open it. She hits the window harder.

KUN DGA' immediately puts down his phone on one of the seats. As he does so, the banging on the car window suddenly stops.

KUN DGA' looks out through the window to locate MTSHO MO. She is nowhere to be seen. As he grabs his phone again, out of nowhere, she comes to the car window and hits it with a rock multiple times. With hard and violent pounding, the car window begins to shatter and finally breaks. KUN DGA' ducks inside the car as if he is being hit.

MTSHO MO

(Gets louder as the window is being broken)

Liar! I followed your instructions exactly! You said you could save my husband and that everything would get better if I listened to you. Liar! You are a fake spirit medium. You are a wolf in sheep's clothing. I will let the world know who you really are and what you have done! You liar!

MTSHO MO cries hysterically and continues to hit the car window. Knowing fragments fragments from the car window will come inside the car and that MTSHO MO will not stop beating the car window, KUN DGA' pushes the door open with his left hand and gets out.

He pushes MTSHO MO away from the car but she rushes back with her hand raised high in the air, trying to hit KUN DGA' with a rock in her hand.

KUN DGA' dodges and holds her hands, forcing her to drop the rock.

KUN DGA'

(Agitated)

Are you crazy? What're you trying to do, huh? Are you trying to hit me? You think you can do that?

MTSHO MO screams in desperation and pain. She struggles to get

away from KUN DGA' and hits him.

MTSHO MO

Don't touch me! Don't let your dirty hands ever touch me! Let go of me! Let go of me! Bitch! Animal!

KUN DGA' shoves her aside in anger. She falls.

KUN DGA'

(Angry and nervous)

Crazy woman! Don't blame your husband's sickness and misfortune on me. I was just there to help. I have nothing to do with it! It's the Mighty One's instructions you chose to follow, not mine! Why are you blaming me? I warned you beforehand. Didn't I? Why do you blame me now? Huh?

MTSHO MO cries harder with pain as she hears KUN DGA'.

MTSHO MO

(In desperation)

Is the baby inside me also a creation of the Mighty One? Should I ask the Mighty One about this too? You animal! You shameless animal! Don't fool me again in the name of the Mighty One! You are disgusting!

MTSHO MO, seemingly out of control, hits the muddy ground with both of her hands constantly. Her face and body are now completely covered in mud.

KUN DGA'

(A little dazed from the situation)

You crazy woman! Don't you see? You're the problem! You are at the root of all the fucking problems! All along! Even the Mighty One said so! Your husband is sick because of you! Your MOTHER-IN-LAW is sad because of you! You're the cause of all the sorrow! Don't you think it's enough? Are you planning to cause more pain to your husband? Your MOTHER-IN-LAW? Family? Will putting your family reputation at risk satisfy you? What else have you not

accomplished? You evil-possessed, cruel bitch!

KUN DGA' takes out some money which he angrily throws down in front of MTSO MO. The several hundred *yuan* bills are immediately soaked by the rain.

KUN DGA'

You decide what you're going to do with the child! Don't ever bother me again! It is not even my fucking child.

KUN DGA' hurries back into the car, leaving MTSO MO in the rain.

MTSO MO sobs in the rain. When KUN DGA' has totally gone, she slowly gets to her feet and walks sadly, step by step, as if she is a zombie.

Int. hospital - day

MTSO MO sits on a bench and stares at the floor. She hears nothing that happens around her. She is preoccupied.

A DOCTOR, dressed in a white coat, sticks his head out from a door that has a sign that reads ABORTION ROOM in Chinese.

DOCTOR

Next! MTSO MO!

MTSO MO does not hear. She is deep in thought.

DOCTOR

MTSO MO! Who is MTSO MO?

MTSO MO gets up and enters the room.

Int. abortion room - day

Walking into the room MTSO MO sees the DOCTOR putting on a pair of white gloves.

DOCTOR

Get in the examination chair.

The DOCTOR points to an examination chair in the corner not paying much attention to MTSHO MO.

MTSHO MO goes to the chair unwillingly. When she is settled, the DOCTOR comes to her, wearing a light blue mask.

DOCTOR

First time?

MTSHO MO nods in response to the DOCTOR's question.

DOCTOR

Take your pants off. Spread your legs apart. Don't move.

MTSHO MO spreads her legs apart. As the doctor comes close to her, she suddenly breaks down and weeps.

MTSHO MO

I can't do it. Sorry!

MTSHO MO gets out of the chair. She pulls on her clothes and runs out, leaving the door wide open. Patients in the waiting room watch MTSHO MO curiously as she leaves.

Int. shop - day

KUN DGA' goes into a village shop, leans on the counter.

KUN DGA'

(Casually)

A pack of cigarettes.

The SHOPKEEPER grabs the cigarette pack from a shelf and throws it on the counter. KUN DGA' unpacks it, brings out one and lights it immediately.

Looking at KUN DGA' behind the counter, the SHOPKEEPER walks toward the counter and leans on it.

SHOPKEEPER

Not in a good mood today?

KUN DGA' looks at the shopkeeper and smiles.

KUN DGA'

Nah, I'm good. Why?

The SHOPKEEPER approaches KUN DGA' a bit more.

SHOPKEEPER

(Looks around)

Listen, KUN DGA', I hope you're not concerned about the rumors flying around. We all know you well and we know for sure you wouldn't do that kind of thing.

KUN DGA' keeps smoking.

KUN DGA'

What kind of thing?

SHOPKEEPER

You know what I'm talking about.

KUN DGA'

(A bit annoyed)

No. I don't know. Tell me.

SHOPKEEPER

MTSHO MO. Your relationship with her.

KUN DGA'

Don't ever talk like that to me as if I have actually done anything. KUN DGA' finishes smoking, throws away the cigarette butt, and leaves the shop.

INT. KUN DGA'S house - day

KUN DGA' is at a washstand. He bends down, refreshes his face with water from a basin. He keeps his face submerged in the water for a while and then raises his head. He looks into a mirror hanging on the wall, stares at it for while and in anger punches it. The mirror shatters. Spots of blood from KUN DGA's hand remain on parts of the half-broken glass.

KUN DGA' remains staring at the broken mirror. He yells in anger and punches the half-broken mirror violently several times. The mirror breaks completely and falls from the wall. Blood drips from his knuckles onto the floor.

I/E. KUN DGA'S car - day

KUN DGA' drives fast, stirring a great deal of dust behind. The car and its dust cloud soon disappear at a turn.

INT. MTSHO MO'S HOUSE - afternoon

MTSHO MO enters her room carrying a bucket of water. She goes to the corner of a room where she begins to prepare a meal. She takes out a bowl of flour from the flour box. She is completely preoccupied. MTSHO MO does not see KUN DGA'.

KUN DGA'

Did you do it? Did you have the abortion?

MTSHO MO is startled. She drops the water scoop in her hand. She turns around and sees KUN DGA' sitting in a dark corner of the room.

KUN DGA'

Did you do it?

MTSHO MO

(Struggles)

No! I don't want to be a murderer!

KUN DGA' comes over and pushes MTSHO MO against the wall.

KUN DGA'

Listen carefully! Whatever you do and whomever you interact with has consequences. I'm fortunate to have the power to change the lives of others, for better or worse. And my help often goes to those who trust me and obey me unconditionally. Likewise, suffering, and calamities befall those who disregard me and their friends and relatives. So, think carefully, I hope you don't belong to the latter category.

I/E. MTSHO MO'S home - morning

MTSHO MO cleans the room. She pours a bit of water on the hearth and scrubs it with a towel along with the pot lids. She then wipes shelves from the top to bottom very carefully. She sprinkles water on the floor and sweeps it. She takes trash out along with her husband's urine pot. She pours urine out from the pot, washes it at an outside tap near the house, brings it back to the room, and places it by her husband's bed.

She then goes to a pile of wood stacked at the corner, raises an axe high, and splits pieces of wood one by one. After she's spilt wood for a while, she carries it inside the room and drops it by the hearth.

She squats, takes a handful of straw by the hearth, puts it in the hearth, places several split pieces of firewood on top, and then sets it on fire with a lighter. She bends her body a little bit with one knee and an arm on the floor and blows attentively on the burning straw. The firewood ignites.

MTSHO MO suddenly gets up and rushes to the door. She gets a small pot from behind the door and brings it to the hearth. When it is bit warm, she cleans its interior with an oily rag.

She brings a plastic bag full of medicines, puts it on the hearth, takes

out a white package, unfolds it, pours a brown powder into the pot, and adds some water. She stirs it with a spoon. The medicine soon boils vigorously.

MTSHO MO takes the medicine from the hearth, places it on the floor, and brings a bowl from the shelf. She then pours the prepared medicine into the pot and walks to her husband. TSHE RING is in bed.

MTSHO MO supports him to sit and attempts to spoon feed him the medicine. TSHE RING turns away from the spoon and refuses to take the medicine.

MTSHO MO patiently offers the medicine again. TSHE RING refuses again and pushes it away. The bowl of medicine spills on the quilt.

MTSHO MO swabs the quilt with a towel. She tries to spoon feed the medicine again. The medicine spills again, this time on TSHE RING's neck. TSHE RING is irritated and slaps MTSHO MO's hand. She loses control of the bowl, which falls to the floor and breaks. She immediately bends down and picks up the spoon. She sweeps the floor and heads to the hearth to prepare more medicine. She adds wood to the withering fire and blows hard to re-energize the fire. She sweats profusely. The fire comes to renewed life.

MTSHO MO pours water from a thermos into a small bowl, adds medicine, and stirs with a small spoon until it boils. She takes the prepared medicine to TSHE RING and again tries to spoon feed him.

TSHE RING refuses the medicine. He does not look at MTSHO MO directly.

MOTHER-IN-LAW observes his refusal to take the medicine, and comes to MTSHO MO. She pushes MTSHO MO aside and starts spoon feeding her son.

TSHE RING again refuses the medicine

MOTHER-IN-LAW

Leave the room! Will you? Don't you see he hates your evil presence? Leave the room! Now!

MTSHO MO stands still, momentarily frozen, and then leaves. She goes outside, sits, and weeps.

Int. MTSHO MO'S home - afternoon

MTSHO MO's living room is extremely messy with a broken medicine bowl and spilled medicine on the floor. The fire in the hearth still burns, but MTSHO MO is nowhere to be seen.

TSHE RING lies on a bed, head buried under a quilt. He is asleep.

A drawer full of pills is open. A thermos without a stopper is on the hearth. It steams.

MOTHER-IN-LAW comes into the room and sees the mess. She looks around for MTSHO MO.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

MTSHO MO! MTSHO MO!

MOTHER-IN-LAW goes out of the room.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

MTSHO MO!

MOTHER-IN-LAW walks to the outside family toilet. She opens the door, but does not find MTSHO MO. She goes to MTSHO MO'S room.

MTSHO MO lies collapsed on the floor. She is pale and motionless. Foam is visible at both corners of her mouth.

A pill container with the lid open is on a table and several pills are scattered on the table. An empty glass cup lies turned over on the

table. Water spilling from the glass drips onto the floor.

MOTHER-IN-LAW rushes to MTSO MO. She wipes the foam from her mouth and pushes away the messy hair that covers parts of her face.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

MTSO MO! MTSO MO!

Int. hospital lounge – that same night

MTSO MO lies on a stretcher that nurses and doctors wheel into an emergency room. Some stare at her, some talk inaudibly. MTSO MO is unconscious. Her right arm dangles from the emergency bed, almost touching the floor. A nurse lifts her dangling arm and places it on the bed.

They push the stretcher into a room that reads EMERGENCY ROOM in Chinese. One of the nurses shuts the EMERGENCY ROOM door on KUN DGA' and MOTHER-IN-LAW, who stop and stand in front of this room.

After a while, the EMERGENCY ROOM door opens. A male DOCTOR comes out holding a pen and a clipboard.

DOCTOR

MTSO MO'S relative! Who is MTSO MO's relative?

KUN DGA' and MOTHER-IN-LAW get up from the bench and hesitantly walk toward the DOCTOR.

DOCTOR

You two are her relatives?

MOTHER-IN-LAW looks at KUN DGA'

MOTHER-IN-LAW

Yes.

DOCTOR

(Little expression on his face)

Good that you came here. MTSHO MO is safe, but unfortunately, we couldn't do much to save the baby. As you know, she took many pills.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

What baby?

MOTHER-IN-LAW looks at KUN DGA' in confusion and back at DOCTOR.

KUN DGA' says nothing. He wears an innocent expression.

The DOCTOR promptly leaves.

Ext. on a mountain top - early morning

Several villagers draw a Dharma Wheel on the ground with flour in accordance with the monks' instructions. They then use their bare hands, mud, and adobe bricks to construct a stupa-like structure that has small openings on all sides. As soon as construction of the adobe platform is complete, they place wood in each of the small openings. They are all ready to light.

They then construct a small, hollow dome on top with adobe bricks and smooth the exterior with mud. When it is halfway done, the villagers cease their work and leave.

Ext. on the mountaintop - around four AM

Male villagers arrive at the mountaintop in groups. Two men carry TSHE RING's corpse, which is now completely and firmly wrapped in white cloth. Amid the monks' stern chanting, several villagers carefully place TSHE RING's corpse into the half-completed cremation chamber and seal it with adobe bricks. They leave a small chimney on top.

After the corpse is sealed in the chamber, they smooth the dome. They make sure there are no cracks. A man ignites the wood placed in the small opening. The wood quickly catches and burns fiercely.

The intensity of the fire grows as the morning wind blows hard into the openings. More smoke is puffed out and swirls up into the sky. Looking from afar, it is as though a bomb has just been ignited on the mountaintop that overlooks the village. It is a magnificent scene in the fog and under the morning sun. A villager blows a conch shell. It echoes.

Ext. at the foot of the mountain - day

MTSHO MO climbs up the mountain and cries in agony. She weeps on the mountaintop.

I/E. MTSHO MO' s house - morning

A dozen monks sit in rows in MTSHO MO's living room, chanting in chorus. A fire made with juniper leaves fills the home yard with smoke. Religious drums constantly beat in rhythm and in accordance with the chanting.

MOTHER-IN-LAW's hair is unkempt. With a look of pain, she spins a prayer wheel. When she sees KUN DGA arrive, she gets up feebly from the floor and goes to meet him. KUN DGA' lends a hand of support as MOTHER-IN-LAW reaches the threshold.

KUN DGA'

Careful!

KUN DGA' helps MOTHER-IN-LAW sit on an old chair. MOTHER-IN-LAW sighs in sadness and fatigue.

KUN DGA'

(Kindly)

Are you holding up all right? I've been worried about you, after all these misfortunes.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

What can I do? Even a great man like you cannot change my son's destiny.

KUN DGA'

I guess it's all predestined. I guess we all are. We can't escape destiny. We'll die eventually. It's just a matter of time.

MOTHER-IN-LAW wipes at her tears with a wrinkled hand.

KUN DGA'

Is MTSO MO holding up all right? I don't see her. Look out for her. Don't let her wander around. She might do stupid things. After all, she's also in great pain and shock.

MOTHER-IN-LAW nods.

KUN DGA' takes out some money, puts in MOTHER-IN-LAW's hands.

KUN DGA'

I heard you and MTSO MO are having difficulties with the funeral services. Here's what I can do to atone for my inability to save your son. Just take it, otherwise my conscience won't let me rest. Let MTSO MO know I'm sorry about everything, too.

KUN DGA' leaves the money in her hands. He stands up and is about to leave.

Suddenly, one of the young men who previously harassed MTSO MO slams the gate open. He carries MTSO MO on his back.

MTSO MO is unconscious and soaking wet.

The YOUNG MAN puts MTSO MO down on the floor and immediately presses down between her breasts, trying to revive her.

KUN DGA' walks to them.

KUN DGA'

Wait! It's you again! What have you done to her! Get out of here!
You don't belong here!

KUN DGA' goes near and drags the YOUNG MAN toward the door.

KUN DGA'

Didn't you hear what I said? Get out!

KUN DGA' continues to drag the YOUNG MAN with great force.

The YOUNG MAN falls. Irritated, he gets up and punches KUN DGA' in the face. KUN DGA' falls hard to the floor. He's unsure what just happened.

YOUNG MAN

Do you think you're her husband? Why don't you take care of her then? Huh? Are you acting like a deity man again? Like last time? I know what you did! I know who you are. Don't cheat us! We have seen people like you before! Actually, many! In prison, too.

The YOUNG MAN spits on the floor.

KUN DGA' spits out some blobs of blood. He stands up and walks towards the YOUNG MAN until he's standing very close to him physically.

KUN DGA'

(In hushed tones)

Do you want to leave by yourself with dignity or be kicked out like the criminal that you are? Look, kid, it doesn't matter what the reality is. What matters is what people think it is. Look around! How do you think these people see this situation? You saving MTSO MO from me? Don't be naive! In their eyes, you're nothing but a fool who has lost his senses over a married woman. Do you think people will believe what you say? Don't fool yourself!

The YOUNG MAN looks around. People are staring at him. MTSO

MO regains consciousness.

YOUNG MAN

(In hushed tones)

People will see who you really are. It is just a matter of time. When they do, they will know who the villain really is.

The YOUNG MAN grabs his jacket and leaves.

Int. police station - day

The YOUNG MAN is handcuffed. A POLICEMAN in uniform escorts him from the police station to a waiting police car with the door open. They enter the car. In the police station, TWO POLICEMEN at a window watch as the car leaves.

POLICEMAN A

Does he know why he has been detained?

POLICEMAN B

(Smiles)

Yeah, I guess so, given how many times he has been through our correctional education programs.

POLICEMAN A

Why did he hit KUN DGA'? Was he drunk?

POLICEMAN B

No. He said what he did was justice.

POLICEMAN A

Justice?

POLICEMAN B

Yeah. But I think the point he was making was that KUN DGA' raped MTSHO MO.

POLICEMAN A

Do you think it's true?

POLICEMAN B

I don't know. Maybe.

POLICEMAN A

Are we investigating? It sounds like a serious crime if the accusation is true.

POLICEMAN B

We will, but not now.

Int. MTSO MO'S home - morning

MTSO MO is half-seated on the floor, making a fire.

MOTHER-IN-LAW throws her deceased son's clothes, medicines, and other belongings on the fire.

MTSO MO sees some medicine in the process and picks it up.

MTSO MO

He was supposed to finish this a month ago. Why are there still some left? Did he take the wrong ones?

MOTHER-IN-LAW

(Angry)

What? Are you blaming TSHE RING's death on me? I thought you would know by now. It's never been about the medicine but YOU! Don't you see you are the root of all the suffering we have been experiencing?

MTSO MO

How could you say such a cruel thing? After all the sacrifices I've made for this family. I've been the breadwinner of this family!

MOTHER-IN-LAW

Breadwinner!? I think troublemaker is more apt! My family was peaceful before your evil arrival. My son was healthy and we were happy. It's you who brought terrible misfortune into this home. You were possessed from the beginning!

MTSHO MO

I knew you never liked me! In fact, you despised me! It was obvious! The way you looked at me and talked to me. My love for my husband, your son, kept me from leaving this home long ago.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

Your love? If you had really loved my son, you would have left him at the beginning, leaving my family in peace. If you had really loved him, you should have kept yourself pure, not sleeping around with other men! Even now, you shouldn't be here.

MTSHO MO

You always talk down to me using religious and moral drivel. You never listened to me, in fact you never believed in me. Even though I'm the closest person you and your son had. Instead, you let someone who doesn't give a shit about your family decide our family matters. And treat him as if he is the Buddha himself.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

It is your infidelity that has trapped us in this abyss of suffering and misfortune!

MTSHO MO

It was you! It was you who invited KUN DGA', the wolf, to save my husband. If you weren't so superstitious and had him treated at the hospital as I insisted, maybe he'd still be well and alive. It was you! Why do you blame me?

MOTHER-IN-LAW

A wolf? What are you then, huh? Don't you see how much he has done for us? You talk like my son was your only love. Was that the reason you slept around with other men - to show your love?

MTSHO MO

How could you say that?

MOTHER-IN-LAW

Why couldn't I? Do you think I'm a fool? I may be old, but I'm not blind. What about the child you cruelly killed? Was that also an act of love?

MTSHO MO

It was all for my husband! To save him, to save the family, but you never knew and will never understand what I have been through to save him and this family from losing its only man.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

What have you been through, huh? Trying to kill yourself when he needed you the most and sleeping with other men when he was sick? Getting pregnant? Tell me! What else have you been through? Enlighten me! Maybe there are other great things you have done that I am unaware of?

MTSHO MO

It was KUN DGA' who did it to me to save my husband. He took advantage of me!

MOTHER-IN-LAW

Shut up! You infidel! You will be cursed for saying such!

MOTHER-IN-LAW faints in anger. MTSHO MO runs to keep her from falling.

Int. clinic bed – that same day

MOTHER-IN-LAW wakes up. She sees KUN DGA' sitting by her. Seeing MOTHER-IN-LAW waking up, KUN DGA' goes to a table and comes with a paper cup filled with hot water.

KUN DGA'

Come, have some water. I was frightened when I heard you had

fainted so I came immediately. I'm glad that I can offer some help.

KUN DGA' carefully hands the cup to her.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

(Holds KUN DGA'S hand)

You are always so kind and helpful, like my son used to be. I do not know how to thank you for all the things you have done for us.

MOTHER-IN-LAW lowers her head and starts to vent her long-buried emotions in long, wails.

KUN DGA'

Please... don't. I already feel so sorry for your son. I tried my best to save him, but destiny is such that even the Mighty One was unable to reverse it. In the end, it's all up to us. It's a matter of us believing in what we hold dear.

We all have our beliefs but unfortunately MTSHO MO's is just different. There is nothing wrong with having a different view. So please don't blame her too much. Everything that has happened and will happen is predestined. Just like plants. They sprout in spring, flower in summer, and wither in winter. It is all prearranged. There's nothing we can do to change that.

Int. MTSHO MO'S parents' home

KUN DGA' knocks on MTSHO MO's parents' door. MTSHO MO's FATHER opens the door.

KUN DGA'

(Standing in front of the door)

Hello. My name is KUN DGA'. I am a friend of MTSHO MO. I am here to talk with you. It is about MTSHO MO. Can I come in?

MTSHO MO'S FATHER

Of course. Come in.

MTSHO MO's FATHER ushers KUN DGA' into the house and invites him to sit.

KUN DGA' briefly examines MTSHO MO's parents' home and then sits on a sofa. MTSHO MO's MOTHER brings tea in a ceramic cup and presents it to him. KUN DGA' stands up and takes the cup from MTSHO MO's mother politely.

KUN DGA'
(Does not smile)

Thank you!

KUN DGA' sips from the cup and puts it down.

KUN DGA'
Thank you for inviting me in. I'm here to talk to you about MTSHO MO. I know it might not be the best time, but I thought you should hear what I have to say.

MTSHO MO'S FATHER
It's OK. We would like to hear.

KUN DGA'
(Hesitates a bit)
I don't know where to start. Pardon me if it sounds ridiculous.

KUN DGA' places the cup on a table placed in front of him.

MTSHO MO's parents look at each other and then refocus on KUN DGA'.

KUN DGA'
The thing is I love her.

MTSHO MO's MOTHER stands up in shock as KUN DGA' continues.

KUN DGA'
Please hear me out. I've come a long way to see you. If you decide

what I say is unreasonable after hearing me out, I'll leave.

MTSHO MO'S FATHER

That's right. Let's hear you out.

MTSHO MO's MOTHER takes a seat.

KUN DGA'

I don't know if MTSHO MO talked to you about me. If she did, I hope she told you the truth. If she hasn't, that is OK too. That is why I'm here.

MTSHO MO's PARENTS still listen.

KUN DGA'

What I want to tell you is that MTSHO MO and I have been in a relationship for a while. She might have told you something differently or even misrepresented me for her own reasons, but the reality is that we have been together for a while.

KUN DGA' pauses a bit and looks at MTSHO MO's parents.

KUN DGA'

We didn't want to mention it to you but, with her husband passing away and no man there to care for her, I feel it's time for me to take responsibility. That's the reason I'm here - to request your permission to take care of her. But if you think it's not a good time, I understand completely. I can wait. I can come at another time.

MTSHO MO's parents sit together in silence, saying nothing to each other.

MTSHO MO's FATHER

It is indeed a bad time, with so many things happening to MTSHO MO and...

KUN DGA' politely interrupts.

KUN DGA'

I know what you are concerned about and it's completely understandable. She is your daughter after all. But we must look to the future, right? As her parents, I'm sure you want her to be taken good care of. And I'm the only one willing to do that. So, please consider what I've said.

KUN DGA' stands up and leaves.

MTSHO MO's PARENTS do not stand. They watch as he leaves.

MTSHO MO's FATHER puts his arm around his wife and pats her shoulder.

Int. MTSHO MO'S home yard - day

MTSHO MO is focused. She splits wood with an axe throwing the pieces into a basket near her. She stops only to wipe away the sweat.

The basket is now full. Nevertheless, MTSHO MO keeps throwing firewood into the basket.

MTSHO MO's PARENTS appear at the gate, bearing some bags of what look like home necessities.

Seeing her parents. MTSHO MO drops the axe and rushes toward them.

MTSHO MO

(With a look of excitement)

I didn't expect you, but come in! Let me help you!

MTSHO MO takes the bags from her parents and leads them inside.

MTSHO MO's FATHER looks at MTSHO MO's MOTHER with a look of satisfaction and happiness. MTSHO MO's MOTHER signals him to follow MTSHO MO.

Int. MTSHO MO's living room - day

MTSHO MO's parents sit. They look around. The living room is tidy and clean. Everything is in order.

MTSHO MO'S FATHER

(Looks at MTSHO MO)

Is everything good? Are you holding up all right?

MTSHO MO

(Whispers)

I'm all right.

MTSHO MO's FATHER is about to say something...

MTSHO MO

Shh...

She freezes and pays attention to the other room. She listens.

MTSHO MO

(In hushed tones)

Shh...My baby is sleeping. I don't want to wake him.

MTSHO MO's PARENTS are confused. They look at each other. MTSHO MO smiles in satisfaction.

MTSHO MO

Oh tea! I forgot!

MTSHO MO runs to the other room, comes back with a thermos, and pours two cups of tea.

MTSHO MO

Have some tea. You must be tired and thirsty.

MTSHO MO's FATHER looks at the tea but does not drink. He looks

at MTSHO MO's MOTHER and then at MTSHO MO.

MTSHO MO'S FATHER

Your baby? What are you talking about?

MTSHO MO

(Interrupts excitedly)

Yes. My son. He's asleep. I don't want to wake him.

MTSHO MO

Hear that? He's awake. He's awake.

MTSHO MO stands up abruptly and rushes to the other room, leaving her mother broken emotionally. She leans on MTSHO MO's FATHER who holds her and pats her shoulder.

Int. MTSHO MO'S bedroom - day

MTSHO MO's FATHER then stands up slowly and walks toward the other room without letting MTSHO MO know that he is coming. He enters the other room. He sees MTSHO MO cradling what seems to be a child in her arms, singing a lullaby in hushed tones.

MTSHO MO's FATHER slowly approaches to see the child and then realizes his daughter is holding a pillow, rocking it back and forth.

MTSHO MO'S FATHER

(Shocked)

MTSHO MO! What are you doing?

MTSHO MO is startled. Standing up abruptly she drops the "child." The pillow falls to the floor. She screams and picks it up immediately.

MTSHO MO

(Worriedly)

My child! Mother's child! Everything is fine. Everything is fine. Mother is here. Mother is here.

MTSHO MO again cradles the "child" in her arms walking back and forth in the room, consoling "him."

MTSHO MO'S FATHER

(Irritated and angry)

MTSHO MO, stop what you're doing! It's not funny!

MTSHO MO looks at her FATHER in fear. She protects the "child" by covering the pillow with her arms, but continues rocking.

MTSHO MO

Mother's child, go to sleep, go to sleep.

MTSHO MO's FATHER runs to her, forcefully grabs the "child" from her, and throws it on the floor.

MTSHO MO'S FATHER

What in the world is wrong with you? This isn't a child! Have you gone crazy?

Seeing the "child" thrown to the floor, MTSHO MO throws herself down holding the "child" in her arms, and cries.

MTSHO MO

(In great empathy)

Don't cry, Mother is here. Mother is here to protect you. Shhh...

Don't cry. Mother's treasure. Don't cry.

MTSHO MO cradles the "child," distancing herself from her FATHER.

MTSHO MO's room becomes quieter. MTSHO MO's FATHER again rushes to MTSHO MO and grabs the "child."

MTSHO MO'S FATHER

I'll show you if this is your child. I'll show you!

He tears the pillow apart into pieces of cotton and throws them into

the air and at her. Cotton bits are all over MTSO MO's room.

MTSO MO'S FATHER

Show me your child now! Show me!

MTSO MO cries her head off. She picks up pieces of cotton scattered around the floor one by one.

MTSO MO's FATHER goes to MTSO MO, forcefully grabbing her shoulders.

MTSO MO'S FATHER

MTSO MO, look at me! Look at me!

MTSO MO struggles, trying to push him off with her hands. She does not look at her FATHER, who then forces her to turn around.

MTSO MO'S FATHER

(In anger and sympathy)

Look at me! It is not a child! It is not your child! It is just a pillow.
Wake up MTSO MO. What's happened to you?

MTSO MO pushes him away with all her force...

MTSO MO

Get away! Murderer! You killed my child! You murderer!

MTSO MO turns to her FATHER and hits him hard - on his face, chest, everywhere. She pushes him out of the room, and out of the house, together with her mother.

MTSO MO

Murderers! Get out of my house, get out of my house!

MTSO MO goes to her mother, shouting and screaming at her.

MTSO MO

Murderers! Get out or I'll call my husband. TSHE RING, come help

me drive these murderers out of our house.

MTSHO MO's PARENTS are pushed outside.

MTSHO MO goes into the house, and comes out with the things her parents had just brought. She throws them out one by one.

MTSHO MO

Get out! Murderers! Murderers!

Ext. KUN DGA' house - early morning

KUN DGA' hears a strong knocking and opens the gate. He sees two POLICE OFFICERS standing in front of him.

POLICEMAN

You are KUN DGA'?

KUN DGA'

(Surprised and nervous)

Yes. Why?

POLICEMAN

(Wearing a serious face)

Put on your clothes and come with us. You are accused of rape.

Int. a narrow interrogation room at the police station - noon

KUN DGA' sits across from TWO POLICEMEN in uniform. He does not look worried. He is relaxed.

POLICEMAN A

What is your relationship with MTSHO MO?

KUN DGA'

We don't have any relationship to speak of. MTSHO MO's family invited me to save TSHE RING. That's all.

POLICEMAN A

Did you, in the process of performing religious rituals, lure her, force her, or in any way compel her to have sexual intercourse with you?

KUN DGA' is angry and leans a bit forward.

KUN DGA'

(Angry)

Don't insult me! Helping people and solving problems is my job, like yours.

POLICEMAN A

Did you, in the process of performing religious rituals, lure her, force her, or in any way compel her to have sexual intercourse with you? Yes or no.

KUN DGA'

No.

POLICEMAN A

Then why would anybody accuse you of raping MTSO MO?

KUN DGA'

That is an irresponsible accusation. You cannot detain or arrest someone just because someone says something, right?

POLICEMAN B writes something down.

POLICEMAN A

It was MTSO MO who accused you. That is why we have summoned you here.

POLICEMAN B stops taking notes and looks at POLICEMAN A.

POLICEMAN A

Answer me! Did you?

KUN DGA'

No. I heard that MTSO MO also said that her husband still lives. But that does not mean he does, does it? I mean no offense to you, but no one takes what she says seriously, given her current mental state.

POLICEMAN A and POLICEMAN B look at each other in despair. They stand up.

POLICEMAN A

One more question. Did you tell MTSO MO that you could cure her husband and they did not need to take him to hospital?

KUN DGA'

No. I would not say such an irresponsible thing. I might have suggested the fact that some hospitals are irresponsible.

POLICEMAN A

The fact?

KUN DGA'

Yes, the fact that they were unable to cure TSHE RING.

POLICEMAN A

How do you know the "fact?" Don't you think that is an irresponsible statement?

KUN DGA'

It might be. But it was what MTSO MO suggested. I was just affirming her feelings. I just wanted to console her. She really needed it at that time. You would do the same I'm sure.

POLICEMAN A looks at POLICEMAN B. POLICEMAN B has been taking notes.

POLICEMAN A

You are free to go now. We will summon you if anything new comes up.

KUN DGA' slowly gets up, looks at them. He is unhappy.

KUN DGA'

(Sighs)

Sure. If anything comes up.

KUN DGA' leaves the interrogation room.

POLICEMAN B

Do you think he did it?

POLICEMAN A

Does it matter what I think?

POLICEMAN A leaves the interrogation room.

Int. a narrow room - day

MOTHER-IN-LAW sits across from the same TWO POLICEMEN.
She is a bit nervous.

POLICEMAN A

How would you describe KUN DGA'? I mean the way he treats you
and MTSHO MO.

MOTHER-IN-LAW thinks for a while.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

He is a good man and acts respectfully in every way. He treats me
as if I am his own mother. I haven't met such a good man in a long
time.

POLICEMAN B takes notes.

POLICEMAN A

I see. Aside from that, did you notice anything unusual between
KUN DGA' and MTSHO MO during KUN DGA''s stay at your home?
Anything at all that caught your attention? Anything you thought

was unusual?

MOTHER-IN-LAW

(Looks at the policemen)

Like what? No! Not at all! I mean why would he do something like that? He is a great man. I have never doubted him.

POLICEMAN B takes notes.

POLICEMAN A

(With a serious face)

Do you think KUN DGA' would harm your daughter-in-law in any way if he had the chance? Hypothetically, you know.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

Of course not, why would he? He is a great person. He was there to help! And we were grateful for his help.

POLICEMAN A

OK. We understand.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

What's wrong? Has anything happened to KUN DGA'?

POLICEMAN A

No. You are free to go.

POLICEMAN B takes notes.

Int. a narrow room - day

MTSHO MO now sits across from the same TWO POLICEMEN. She is nervous and holds her head down, looking at the floor.

POLICEMAN A

(Wearing a serious look)

Don't be nervous or anything. We are here to help you. Tell us the truth. Did KUN DGA' force you against your will? Or did he lure you

or compel you to have sexual intercourse with him?

MTSHO MO looks around.

MTSHO MO

(With a scared look)

KUN DGA', the powerful spirit medium? No, no, he did not.

POLICEMAN B looks at POLICEMAN A in confusion.

POLICEMAN A

Tell us the truth. It is the only chance to get him punished for the harm he has done you. You don't need to be afraid.

MTSHO MO

Punished? No! No! I don't want to be punished again. I have done nothing wrong, have I?

POLICEMEN A and B look at each other.

POLICEMAN A

No. You have not done anything wrong.

MTSHO MO

(With a look of pleading in her eyes)

That is good. May I leave then?

POLICEMAN A

Yes. You can leave.

MTSHO MO gets up immediately and leaves the room.

POLICEMAN A and POLICEMAN B remain in the interrogation room.

POLICEMAN B puts away his notebook. POLICEMAN A leans against the interrogation table while standing.

POLICEMAN B

You could have asked her more questions. Why didn't you? I feel she would have revealed more information if we had waited longer and asked more questions.

POLICEMAN A

Doesn't really matter what she says at this point. Given her current mental health, what she says will hardly convince people, not to mention a judge if she went to court.

POLICEMAN A reaches into his pocket, brings out a cigarette and lights it. He watches MTSO MO through the barred window as she leaves the POLICE STATION with her head down.

POLICEMAN A

It is how society is. Sly people always win. And we cannot do anything about it but try to find hard evidence, you know. You are new to this. You will learn more about it as time passes.

POLICEMAN A stops smoking and throws his half-smoked cigarette away.

Int. the silver car - afternoon

KUN DGA' wakes up. He opens his eyes and realizes the ASSISTANT is honking continuously. They have stopped for some reason.

KUN DGA'

What is it?

ASSISTANT

I'm not sure. Looks like an accident. Looks like we've got some waiting to do.

KUN DGA'

(A bit annoyed)

Isn't anyone directing the traffic?

ASSISTANT

I guess not. There's a big crowd of people in the middle of the road.

The ASSISTANT kills the car engine and then steps out of the car.

ASSISTANT

Let me check what's going on.

The ASSISTANT leaves for the accident scene.

KUN DGA' watches the ASSISTANT from inside the car. He lights a cigarette, smokes, and sighs in annoyance.

Ext. the silver car - afternoon

After a while, KUN DGA' also gets out and heads toward the scene. Passing several motorcycles and cars, he sees a crowd of people murmuring in groups.

Ext. the accident scene - afternoon

A silver car that resembles KUN DGA's is parked in the middle of a narrow village road. Its front is badly dented. The front tires are covered in blood. It seems something was dragged for some meters

KUN DGA' follows the blood trail. It leads him to a group of people, half-seated, circling someone. Seeing the ASSISTANT there he approaches him.

KUN DGA'

What's the matter?

ASSISTANT

(Does not look at KUN DGA')

An awful accident. Someone was hit by that car.

KUN DGA' looks at the car and approaches the group. He tiptoes to see the victim. She is unconscious. Her face and shirt are covered in

blood. KUN DGA' comes closer to the ASSISTANT.

KUN DGA'

(Does not look at the ASSISTANT)

Is she OK? She doesn't look good.

ASSISTANT

Don't know. It seems she is seriously hurt. I heard the driver say she jumped in front of the car out of the blue.

KUN DGA'

Jumped? What do you mean? Intentionally?

ASSISTANT

I think so. But who knows. Maybe it was the driver's excuse. Nobody witnessed the accident.

KUN DGA'

Why would anyone jump in front of a car, intentionally? That doesn't make any sense!

ASSISTANT

That's the point the driver was making. I guess he was trying to avoid responsibility. The victim is that crazy woman. So he might get away with it.

KUN DGA'

What crazy woman?

ASSISTANT

MTSHO MO! The crazy woman! The one who tried to wrong you.

ASSISTANT does not see KUN DGA''s reactions.

KUN DGA' is startled. He rushes back to the crowd and tries to see more. Suddenly, with siren blaring, an ambulance arrives. Several medical personnel jump out to take care of the victim. They take her into the van and leave in a rush. KUN DGA' watches the vehicle as it

leaves and then returns to his car.

ASSISTANT

The traffic is clearing. Should we go now?

KUN DGA' does not say anything.

The ASSISTANT follows him to the car.

Int. silver car - day

KUN DGA' says not a word. He is preoccupied.

The ASSISTANT looks at him several times while he drives.

ASSISTANT

Are you OK?

KUN DGA' looks at the ASSISTANT

KUN DGA'

Yeah. I am OK.

ASSISTANT

You know what people were saying about the accident?

KUN DGA'

(In a matter-of-fact attitude)

What? What were they saying?

ASSISTANT

(A bit excited)

That she indeed jumped in front of the car to kill herself. And that she had been in great agony and sorrow.

KUN DGA'

(In a matter-of-fact attitude)

Why?

ASSISTANT

Because she's crazy, that's why. She doesn't think straight. I wonder how she passed her days? You know. Maybe it's a good ending. Maybe I'd do the same thing if I were her. You know. Just be done with life and start anew.

KUN DGA'

Yeah, I guess so.

ASSISTANT

You know what else they're talking about?

KUN DGA'

(Annoyed)

What else?

ASSISTANT

That she deserved to be hit by the car. Can you believe that?

KUN DGA'

Why would people say such a cruel thing?

ASSISTANT

Well, I guess people think that she often said crazy things that people can't accept.

KUN DGA'

Like what? What crazy things did she say?

ASSISTANT

Don't know exactly what she said, but something like she was pregnant with some deity's baby. It's just one of the crazy things she talked about I think. She talked about you disrespectfully I heard.

KUN DGA'

Do you think people believed her?

ASSISTANT

I don't think so. That's why people think she's crazy.

KUN DGA'

I see. People are crazy these days. They talk about all kinds of stupid things.

ASSISTANT

Yeah. People are. These days, I don't know what is true and real anymore.

KUN DGA' does not say anything.

KUN DGA' observes the scene as they slowly drive by, carefully looking at the silver car.

ASSISTANT

It looks like ours, doesn't it? I didn't realize that the first time! Somebody would mistake it for ours if it were not for the number plate you know.

KUN DGA' hears the ASSISTANT but does not respond. He keeps looking outside.

ASSISTANT

I mean, it's good that we pulled over and let her go first. Otherwise we could've been the ones paying the heavy price for hitting the woman. It's a death sentence.

KUN DGA'

Death sentence?

ASSISTANT

Yeah. I mean financially. If she wasn't killed on the spot - I don't mean she should be. Let's say she wasn't. Then medical treatment until full recovery would cost a fortune. But there's a tricky part. If she didn't recover and died after a long period of treatment, you'd have to pay another 400,000 to compensate as the law requires.

That's a lot of money. A friend of mine had such an experience and had to pay 600,000 to settle. He had to sell everything he had and borrow from everyone he knew. He's broke, divorced, and mentally unstable.

KUN DGA'

That's unfair.

ASSISTANT

It's a precious life we are talking about.

KUN DGA'

I mean it is not fair for the driver. If the woman jumped in front of the car intentionally, to commit suicide for whatever reason, you know.

ASSISTANT

(Turns his head a bit toward KUN DGA')

Yes. I guess so. It's hard to say. Maybe she had a reason?

KUN DGA' looks out through the side window. He does not say a word. He is aloof and in deep thought.

Ext. a new Tibetan household

The ASSISTANT parks the car in front of a home gate. A number of Tibetan villagers await him. As soon as KUN DGA' gets out of the car, two villagers walk to him politely and invite him into a yard that leads to a modern-looking Tibetan house.

KUN DGA'

What's your problem and how can I help you?

The ASSISTANT opens the trunk. He takes out the box of ritual performance implements and follows KUN DGA' into the house.

Int. home (In a different Tibetan village.)

A family gathers in the modern Tibetan house. An old RELIGIOUS-LOOKING MAN – a *BLA MA* - recites religious mantras very quickly.

An AGED MAN, AGED WOMAN, and an ADULT in his early twenties kneel, face the *BLA MA*. All wear Tibetan robes.

The *BLA MA* recites more loudly and faster, accompanied by the sounds of his religious implements. The kneeling ADULT begins shaking his head and then his entire body. He is possessed. Seeing the ADULT's reactions to his ritual, the *BLA MA* comes down from his seat. He touches the ADULT's foreheads with his right hand. There is a sense of power.

BLA MA

(Eyes closed)

Now that you have gone through the rite of passage, you are a spirit medium. You are no longer an ordinary person. You are a holy servant of the Mighty One. With this newly bestowed title and reverence that comes with it, you must realize your existence is only to serve the Mighty One, to help and guide people to overcome misfortunes and calamities. May you stay on the course as long as you are a spirit medium! May the lure of money, power, and women not dissuade from you from being true to yourself and to the vows you make today. May you be a true manifestation of our religion, which is to love all beings and help them equally and with no conditions attached!

The AGED MAN and AGED WOMAN kneeling by the ADULT prostrate to the *BLA MA*.

NON-ENGLISH TERMS

bla ma བླ་མ།

chos sde ཆོས་སྡེ།

dbang rgyal don grub དབང་རྒྱལ་དོན་གྲུབ།

gcan tsha གཅན་ཅེ།

Jianzha 尖扎

kun dga' ཀུན་དགལ།

lha ba ལྷ་བ།

lha mo ལྷ་མོ།

mtsho mo མཚོ་མོ།

mtsho sngon མཚོ་སྒོན།

Qinghai 青海

reb gong རེབ་གོང་།

rin chen རིན་ཆེན།

spyang skad rdo rje rgyal སྤྱང་སྐད་རོ་རྒྱལ།

tshe ring rdo rje ཚེ་རིང་རོ་རྒྱལ།

tshe ring ཚེ་རིང་།

Xining 西宁

zi ling ཟི་ལིང་།